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THE INDEPENDENT

ON SATURDAY

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TOP STORIES

The answer to youth crime?

Forcing young offenders to meet their victims makes them think again about committing crime, according to new research. The numbers that re-offend, after seeing their victims face-to-face fall to an eighth of what would normally be expected. Social services leaders, probation officers and penal reformers yesterday called for mediation schemes to be implemented widely to help combat youth crime. At present a quarter of all crime is committed by under-17s and half by under-21s. Full story below

Branson takes on the banks

Richard Branson, the billionaire head of Virgin, yesterday launched his most audacious attack yet on high street banks, announcing an innovative one-stop account he claimed could save people tens of thousands of pounds during their lifetimes. Virgin One, a joint venture with the Royal Bank of Scotland, will combine mortgages, current accounts and savings into one package. Page 3, Outlook page 27

OTHER NEWS

New curbs on legal aid

In a major overhaul of the justice system, the Government revealed yesterday that legal aid would be withdrawn from most civil actions and "no win, no fee" deals would be extended for lawyers in England and Wales. The Law Society said would mean a curtailment of many peoples' access to the courts. Page 5

Baby 'injured before'

The trial of the British nanny, Louise Woodward, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, was told yesterday that the baby Matthew Eappen suffered brain injury more than three weeks before she is alleged to have battered and shaken him. The claim was made by a medical expert called by the defence. Page 5

Rat tsar wanted

A "rat tsar" may be needed to crack down on a population explosion of rodents, a conference in London heard yesterday. The water companies, whose sewage pipes have become homes for the rats, admit the current system of pest control is inadequate. Page 7

This gay life

Plans for a new series of the cult television series *This Life* have ground to a halt. One of the main problems has been caused by an attempt to inject more gay sex into the script. Page 9

Cook in royal row

The Queen yesterday took the unusual step of defending Robin Cook against reports of a rift between Buckingham Palace and the Foreign Office over her trip to India. Page 17

INSIDE TODAY

ISM/Our new magazine

TIME OFF/
Sport, travel & leisure

YOUR MONEY/

Personal finance, property & cars

THE EYE/
Your full weekly television guide

Frolicking along on the crest of a wave...



A bottlenose dolphin swims playfully before the bow surf of a supertanker off the coast of Texas. The photograph is part of the 40th World Press Photo exhibition, displaying pictures from the world's main events of 1996, which opens next Friday at the Royal Festival Hall, London, and runs until 16 November. Photograph: Michel and Christine Denis-Huot

The ultimate deterrent: facing up to the victims

BY GLENDA COOPER

After knocking back a bottle of Martini, Wayne and Robin (not their real names) went out on a spree, breaking into two cars. One of the cars belonged to a Mr Judge and the items Robin and Wayne stole had been presents from his wife, just months before she died.

In an experiment which has proved to be remarkably successful, the teenagers were brought face-to-face with Mr Judge. Trembling with emotion he yelled at them: "On our final anniversary she gave me some presents for my car. I treasured the travel rug, sunglasses, camera and book that she gave me. And the morning after your stupid, ignorant behaviour I found those presents thrown into the hedge like rubbish." The pair who had already been cautioned by the police ended the meeting with their victim by apologising and paying £100 compensation.

Wayne and Robin were just two of nearly 400 young offenders who have taken part in a pilot scheme where victims and offenders are brought together. The scheme has produced startling figures which suggest that young people who take part are much less likely to commit another crime. In fact, the Restorative Justice scheme run by Thames Valley Police in Buckinghamshire claims that recidivism was reduced to an eighth of its previous level - down from around 30 per cent to 4 per cent.

Social service leaders, probation officers and penal reformers called for such schemes to be more widely implemented last night. "We would like to see the restorative justice approach extended throughout the country and the criminal justice process," said Paul Cavadino, principal officer of the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders.

The results reflect findings around the world where similar schemes have also had remarkable success. Fewer young people committing serial crimes are being locked up and victims report feeling their views have been taken into account as well. It could mean an end to celebrated cases such as the serial offender known as Ratboy - Anthony Kennedy, 17, from Newcastle, who was jailed earlier this year after a six-year criminal career.

A 1996 study in Canada found an 80 per cent reduction in further criminal behaviour by those attending a similar scheme. In New Zealand, after a law was brought in in 1989 which made young offenders and their families meet their victims, court cases involving young people dropped from between 10 to 13,000 cases a year to 2,587 the year after. Entry to correctional institutions also dropped by 50 per cent.

The largest study of more than 3,000

young offenders in four major American cities in 1994 found that reoffending dropped from 27 to 18 per cent and "considerably fewer and less serious crimes were committed".

Thames Valley Police has conducted 367 conferences involving young offenders aged between 10 and 17 since the scheme was set up two years ago. Only youngsters facing cautions for offences can take part

and they are accompanied by their parents. Victims have included shop managers, motorists and a woman who was assaulted in the street. They must agree to take part in the conferences which last up to 40 minutes. They can take a friend for moral support.

The Chief Constable of Thames Valley, Charles Pollard, said 60 officers have been trained to run the scheme. "I see this as a permanent thing, without a doubt. I personally would like to see it replicated. We expect the results to show an even greater reduction in reoffending in about two to three years."

Constable Bob Gregory who is helping to co-ordinate the face-to-face sessions said: "I was Mr Sceptical. I thought it would never work in a month of Sundays. I was won over by observing them. It is not a soft option. We think going to court is hard, but court is only measuring blame and apportioning punishment. This is punishing. Young offenders have to listen to the effect they have had on the victim and that's hard, that's very, very difficult."

Professor Tim Newburn, head of crime justice and youth studies at the Policy Studies Institute, said: "This general approach has a lot of potential and it's certainly important for agencies to explore as it remains relatively untested."

He called for education and health services to also get involved in the treatment of young offenders: "Their offending is not usually the only problem they have". A handful of schemes are run across the country by a mixture of social services, voluntary agencies teams and the police. Andy James, who runs a Barnardo's project in Neath and Port Talbot area, said 80 per cent of the 100 children they saw a year did not re-offend. "And the victim also gets a chance to confront their offender and come to terms with what has happened to them."

The Association of Directors of Social Services also called for more work to be done on the scheme. Harry Fletcher, assistant secretary general of the National Association of Probation Officers said: "There is now clear evidence that direct mediation is helpful - it is therapeutic for the victim and has a positive impact on reoffending."

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TELEVISION The Eye
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Time Off, page 14

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COLUMN ONE

Puffins lead the way to road safety

The trouble with roads, for most motorists, is that pedestrians want to cross them. Yesterday saw the latest addition to the menagerie of road safety schemes inhabiting the nation's roadsides: the Puffin.

Replacing the Pelican and complementing the Zebra, the Puffin crossing or (pedestrian user-friendly intelligent) walkway will see legislation laid before parliament on Monday to allow the "clever" system to be laid across the nation's highways.

The Government earlier this week made it clear that "more intelligent" systems would help it set an ambitious target of reducing road deaths by 2010. It is already well on the way of reducing fatalities by a third by the turn of the decade. Ministers point out that the Netherlands is trialling systems that automatically stop cars, with electronic brakes, from exceeding urban speed limits, and that Sweden has a "zero death" target for its roads.

The hi-tech Puffins, which have been tried out at more than 60 sites across the country, use detectors to monitor the progress of pedestrians across the road. If more time is required for the pedestrian to cross, the red traffic light signal is extended. Puffins will also solve a common complaint made about Pelican crossings. Above-ground sensors detect if the pedestrian moves away or crosses before being signalled and cancel the red signal request so that motorists are not stopped unnecessarily.



Puffin crossings also do not have flashing lights but show either a steady red or steady green.

It may seem a small step, but a close look at the road fatality figures suggest otherwise. More than 4,200 people were either killed or injured on road crossings and a further 4,000 were hit within 50 metres of a pedestrian walkway last year.

The origins of such life-saving measures have their roots in Roman times. The earliest example of a pedestrian crossing was the use of stone slabs in Pompeii to save citizens from rushing chariots and reckless carts.

The first pedestrian crossings in Britain were found in London in the late-Twenties. Consisting of little more than a series of red, yellow or white diagonal strips, they were not considered a success. The real breakthrough came with the now familiar "Belisha" beacon (above) a decade later, whose flashing amber globes were named after the Labour minister of transport Mr Leslie Hore-Belisha.

The success of the Belisha beacon almost proved to be its downfall. By the end of the Forties, the nation's motorists encountered the crossings so regularly they no longer stopped to let pedestrians pass. The government acted and cut the number of crossings from 30,000 to 10,000.

Other schemes have not been so successful. In 1962, the Panda crossing made its appearance on Britain's streets. Its distinctive black and white post was easily recognisable but the crossings complex signalling meant motorists simply ignored its instructions. Twelve months later the Panda was extinct. Today's most popular pedestrian walkway is the Pelican crossing. Introduced in the early 1970s, the Department of Transport said that "they had shown a substantial reduction in casualties".

Baroness Hayman, the roads minister, said: "The new generation Puffin crossings are an excellent example of how new technology can be used to deliver significant benefits to both pedestrians and motorists alike."

— Randeep Ramesh

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ZITS



PEOPLE



Leslie's man is behaving badly – allegedly

The domestic lives of celebrities have been playing havoc with the plans of advertisers and television schedulers this week.

Leslie Ash, star of *Men Behaving Badly*, and her husband, former footballer Lee Chapman, will present a new series together (above) from tomorrow, despite the fact that Mr Chapman was charged with common assault against Ms Ash on Thursday.

Unlike the Shredded Wheat brand, which dropped Glen Hoddle and his wife from an advertising campaign this week when the couple announced they were separating, London Weekend Television has confirmed that it will air a 10-part restaurant review programme which is hosted by the couple.

The programme, *Dinner Dates*, features Ash and Chapman interviewing chefs and customers at restaurants while other celebrities review the food. The shows were recorded over the past 10 months and the first celebrity to appear with them will be society columnist Tara Palmer-Tomkinson.

Andy Burgess, a spokesman for LWT, said: "LWT is very proud of the programme, so are Leslie and Lee, so the show will continue to go out as planned."

The programme's 10-week run will mean it will show the couple in harmony on air while Mr Chapman, 37, is appearing at South Western magistrates' court, in London, on 13 November, on charges of common assault and criminal damage.

Mr Chapman was arrested at the Wandsworth home of Ms Ash's *Men Behaving Badly* co-star, Caroline Quentin, on Thursday night.

Ms Ash is reported to have fled to Ms Quentin's home after a row with the former Leeds United player. Mr Chapman is then alleged to have tried to kick Ms Quentin's door down before police arrived and arrested him. Mr Chapman was held in the cells at a local police station until he was bailed.

Mr Chapman, 37, retired from football last year and now runs a bar. He has been married to Ms Ash since 1986 and the couple have two sons, aged four and seven.

Ms Ash has no need of the publicity. A new series of *Men Behaving Badly* begins next month and the BBC has already centred its pre-publicity effort around Leslie Ash's character and her relationship with Neil Morrissey's badly behaved character, Tony.

— Paul McCann

Court awards Kegworth widow £11,000



The widow of one of the victims of the 1989 Kegworth air disaster was yesterday awarded £11,182 damages in the High Court in London.

Anne Glackin, 59, of Newtownabbey, Co Antrim, who was separated from her husband David, 51, when he died from severe chest injuries suffered in the crash, was awarded the sum against British Midland Airways and the engine manufacturers.

Mrs Glackin, whose claim had been for a six-figure sum, looked shocked as Judge Anthony Thompson QC gave his decision yesterday. Shortly after leaving the

High Court building, photographers saw Mrs Glackin (left) collapse. She was driven off in an ambulance.

Earlier, her son Jim, 32, said outside court: "Our family's lives were destroyed by the crash. Today we have been very disappointed that the court has not seen the damage that has been done."

Mrs Glackin had claimed damages on behalf of herself and for her daughter Sophia, now 26, who was still at school when her father died. Her five other children were grown-up at the time. She and her husband had been planning to get back together.

Tofu and beans pay £1,000 dividend for schoolgirl

For one vegetarian public schoolgirl, a loyalty to tofu and beans over burgers and bacon has led to a £1,000 saving on school fees, thanks to a forgotten vegetarian scholarship.

Lisa Stephenson, 15, a pupil at Wyeliffe College, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire, saved her parents a year's fees after unearthing details of an award set

up by an Edwardian headmaster at the school in 1909. The scholarship had gone unclaimed since 1943, but Lisa, a pupil at the school for two years and a committed vegetarian, was a clear candidate.

She said yesterday: "When I heard vegetarians could get a special scholarship I spoke to my tutor and he had a word with the headmaster."

"I have been vegetarian all my life. So have all my family. I don't even have to take any exams to get the award – just carry on not eating meat."

The school – motto "Bold and Loyal" – has blazed a vegetarian trail since the days of headmaster George Sibly, who introduced two annual meat-free scholarships early this century. As a crusading vegetarian, Sibly was a rare beast at the time and a fierce debate raged over whether lack of meat would harm growing children. But he stuck to his guns and in 1909 founded Springfield House – an experimental boarding house within the college where boys lived on salads, nuts, lentils and honey, and where steak was firmly off the menu.

When Sibly's son William took over as headmaster of Wyeliffe he took a group of pupils to a vegetarian conference in Holland in 1946.

Among the pupils was Lisa's grandfather Roger Bacon – who met and fell in love with vegetarian Dutch woman Marja Klerks. She later became his wife and the grandmother of Lisa.

— Lucy Ward

UPDATE

HEALTH

Fraudbuster prescribed for NHS

The Government is to appoint an NHS fraudbuster to crack down on people who steal money destined for the treatment of patients, it announced yesterday.

The move is part of a campaign against prescription, optical and dental fraud, and follows a package of tough measures announced in the summer to counter the £100m a year prescription fraud racket. Details of the fraudbuster will be announced by the end of November.

"The overwhelming majority of health professionals are hard working and honest but a few rotten apples are robbing the system blind," Alan Milburn, minister for health, said. Mr Milburn said he was "alarmed and shocked" at some of the figures involved in these cases and at the loss through prescription charge evasion, theft and forgery.

"What fraudsters are actually doing is stealing money that ought to be treating patients. My message to the fraudsters is that life is going to get tough," he added. The fraudbuster will lead a small team to help crack down on fraudulent activity the NHS. The Efficiency Report into Prescription Fraud, published in June, estimated that up to £100m was lost through prescription charge evasion each year and a further £15m from theft or forgery. No estimate has been put on losses to doctors and pharmacists.

LIFESTYLE

Britons shun advertising overkill



The British are being bombarded by so much commercial information that one third of the population is now actively trying to avoid advertising, according to a new report.

The average British commuter sees 80 to 100 commercial messages between getting up and reaching their office each day. The average person will see 250 television advertisements per week, 350 poster sites and 400 press adverts per week, according to the Henley Centre's Media Futures report.

Advertising on eggs, in pub toilets or on petrol pump nozzles means that each day we are exposed to 1300 commercial messages. In total there are 11,000 television adverts broadcast every day in 1997, compared with 1987 when there were 500 shown a day. The reason for this has been an explosion in media and in commercial products. In 1950 each Sainsbury's supermarket stocked 550 product lines. In 1997 each store carries over 20,000 different products. Research by media buying agency Western Media indicates that one in three people is now what is termed an "ad avoider" – someone who goes out of their way to ignore advertising.

— Paul McCann

BOOKS

Climber scales literary heights

A first book, written while recovering from a fractured spine and skill sustained in an ice-climbing accident, yesterday carried off Britain's prestigious Boardman Tasker Award for mountaineering literature.

Paul Pritchard has already had cheated death on two occasions, and on the first he plunged into the sea from the cliffs of North Wales, so it may be as well he has produced his autobiography, *Deep Play*, at the relatively early age of 30. Pritchard is one of the iconoclasts operating at the frontiers of adventurous climbing. He has just returned from the Pamirs in central Asia where he made a first ascent of a high altitude, 1,200-metre cliff. As bold in his writing style as some of Pritchard's "necky" routes, the book moves from the low life of the climbing community of Llanberis in world's greatest rock walls in Patagonia and the Karakoram.

The Boardman Tasker prize, named after two climbers who perished on Everest, is a Booker in miniature, exciting controversy in the world of mountain books. This year the judges had 25 books on their list. Pritchard carried off a cheque for £2,000. But it is recognition by his peers that matters most. As he said afterwards: "I was blown away to get on the short list."

• *"Deep Play"* by Paul Pritchard is published by Baton Wicks, price £16.99.

— Stephen Goodwin

TOURIST RATES

Australia (dollars)	2.12	Italy (lira)	2,706
Austria (schillings)	19.29	Japan (yen)	191.31
Belgium (francs)	56.97	Malta (lira)	0.61
Canada (\$)	2.17	Netherlands (guilders)	3.11
Cyprus (pounds)	0.81	Norway (kroner)	11.13
Denmark (kroner)	10.58	Portugal (escudos)	279.64
France (francs)	9.26	Spain (pesetas)	232.57
Germany (marks)	2.77	Sweden (kroner)	12.00
Greece (drachme)	436.42	Switzerland (francs)	2.31
Hong Kong (\$)	12.07	Turkey (lira)	274.65
Ireland (punts)	1.07	USA (\$)	1.57

Source: Thomson Cook

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مکانا من اناصل

Carnivores celebrate a bloody good thing



On the hoof: Members of the Carnivores' Club in action during their annual dinner at Butchers' Hall, in Smithfield, the heart of London's meat Mecca

Photograph: David Rose

They eat as much red meat as they can lay their hands on, they drink to excess and most of them smoke. Steve Boggon spent a night with the Carnivores' Club as researchers at Cambridge University rubbished government claims that red meat is bad for you

"Aah, delicious - salmonella and BSE," Ned Sherrin is once supposed to have said as his starter arrived at Chez Gérard. The dish was steak tartare and the story was

served up by Jennifer Paterson, one half of the Two Fat Ladies. She was one of 160 guests at the annual Carnivores' Club dinner at - inevitably - Butchers' Hall, in Smithfield, London's meat Mecca. Here, health warnings were as welcome as a kissogram at a funeral, cigarettes and cigars were liberally sprinkled among the silverware and the wine flowed as if there were no tomorrow, for tomorrow would bring some monumental hangovers.

The Carnivores' Club was founded five years ago by Laurence Isaacson and Neville Abraham of the Chez Gérard group of London restaurants. They were fed up of food scares, of evange-

listic vegetarians and of the creeping insidiousness of political correctness. "I don't have a problem with vegetarians so long as they are well sautéed and served up with a good portion of chips," said Mr Isaacson. He, like other guests, had just negotiated his way past a huge beifer tied to railings outside the hall, and wore a lapel badge of a small plate on which there was an effigy of a dead cow.

"This is simply an exercise in reminding people that red meat, as part of a balanced diet, is absolutely wonderful. Because of the BSE crisis and the subsequent controls on quality, British beef has never been better. Ninety-five per cent of people in this country

eat meat but they are the quiet majority - the minority, the vegetarians, are the noisy ones. Well it's time to bite back!" And bite back they did. The bon viveurs, mainly City types, foodies and journalists, bit into 120lb of Aberdeen Angus cross, 10 gallons of game consommé, eight plums of horseradish sauce, 100lb of cheese, 200 bottles of wine and 150lb of vegetables; all on top of the *foie gras*, charcuterie and canapés. Last month their consumption would have been deemed dangerous when Frank Dobson, Secretary of State for Health, said government scientists believed too much red meat could cause cancer. Yesterday, howev-

er, Margaret Wichelow, of Cambridge University, published results of a study among 3,660 adults which showed red-meat eaters run no greater risk from cancer than those who abstain. "It is ... confusing for the general public. It possibly was not wise for the Government to issue the recommendations when they did. It might have been premature."

Back at Butchers' Hall, Charles Campton, the London *Evening Standard* Magazine's portly food writer, pulled from his pocket a film-wrapped pack of supermarket beef and held it aloft so he could rubbish it. We should, he said, eat less meat. There were gasps of horror until he said less,

but better quality. And that seemed an appropriate theme because, for all its bedonistic bluster, the message from the club was clear - from vegetables poisoned by organophosphates to meat infected as a result of turning herbivores into cannibals, the food industry had been rumbled. Consumers will stand for it no more.

"People have to remember there is nothing wrong with eating good red meat - or white meat, game, fish, poultry, vegetables," said Ms Paterson, lighting another cigarette. "All these food scares are ridiculous. Just go and get yourself some good, fresh food and enjoy it. That's what God gave it to us for."

IN THE INDEPENDENT ON MONDAY

DEBORAH ROSS INTERVIEW

Once thought able to walk on the Tyne, Kevin Keegan is now treated more like a fog there. He advertises with the Honey Monster (could that be Mohamed Al Fayed?) MEDIA+

The two trials of Louise Woodward: One is in court in the US, the other is everywhere else STYLE

A final look at a hectic week of fashion

INSIDE TODAY

PROMOTION

Take a short break in Paris

with Eurostar from £85, Time Off, page 4

After pop, planes and cola, Branson takes on the banks

Richard Branson yesterday launched one of his most ambitious assaults yet on the financial establishment, announcing details of a 'revolutionary' one-stop bank designed to let people run all their financial affairs from a single account. Tom Stevenson, financial editor, examines the pros and cons of the billionaire entrepreneur's latest venture.



Richard Branson (left) yesterday with George Mathewson, chief executive of Royal Bank of Scotland, with whom he has teamed up to launch Virgin One bank accounts

Virgin Direct, Richard Branson's financial services company, has teamed up with Royal Bank of Scotland to take on the powerful high street banks in their own backyard - savings and loans. The company claimed yesterday that a new all-in account, combining borrowings and savings, could save people tens of thousands of pounds during their lifetimes. The new service, Virgin One, allows people to run all their finances - from buying a house to paying bills, running a current account and saving for a rainy day - using just one account. Aimed at busy people with neither the time nor the inclination to shop around for best-buy financial products, it is being marketed as a one-stop shop for personal finances.

Mr Branson said yesterday: "Banking is inherently a very straightforward business: it astonishes me that it has been allowed to become so complicated. The launch of Virgin One should provide a breath of fresh air - people will look back some day and wonder why banking wasn't always done this way."

Virgin One differs from other accounts by bundling up most of a customer's financial affairs into one package, offering positive assets such as deposit account savings against

liabilities such as a mortgage and car loans, to give a net, negative balance attracting a single rate of interest.

A customer with a £100,000 mortgage, £5,000 car loan and £10,000 of savings might therefore take out a £100,000 borrowing facility with Virgin One. That would be used to repay net liabilities of £95,000 and leave £5,000 of available spare cash.

According to Virgin, because a single variable interest rate would be payable on the whole loan - at present 8.2 per cent - the customer would receive a higher interest rate on savings than available elsewhere and pay lower interest charges on the non-mortgage part of the debt than the high rates usually charged for unsecured loans and credit card borrowings.

Virgin will insist that account holders pay their salary into the account. Because that is used immediately to offset mortgage debt, it earns an effective rate of interest of 8.2 per cent until it is spent. There is no tax to pay on savings, because

they are always offset by borrowings and the account, which has a lower limit of £50,000 debt, is always in the red.

Virgin said the flexibility of the account would allow customers to pay their mortgages off more quickly than a traditional 25-year fixed-term home loan easily allows, potentially saving thousands of pounds over the life of a loan.

Despite the fanfare, the Virgin account received muted applause from personal finance experts who pointed out that most people needed the external discipline imposed by a direct debit payment to pay off their mortgage that left them with an amount each month that they knew they could safely spend.

Running the whole range of financial affairs from one account, critics added, meant many customers would simply spend until they reached their agreed limit, which could be as high as the value of their home. Anyone who failed to plan ahead adequately could find themselves reaching retirement with a heavy debt and only one

asset with which to repay it - their house.

Other critics pointed out that anyone with a large mortgage compared to their other loans or savings would be better off shopping around for a cheaper home loan. A 1 per cent saving on a large mortgage - for example, by taking out one of the many fixed-rate mortgages now on offer - would more than offset the benefits of the other interest savings.

Virgin Direct was launched in early 1995 and has so far specialised in long-term savings products such as personal equity plans and pensions, and life insurance. Its move into banking represents the latest threat to traditional high street banks, which are already reeling from assaults by retailers such as Sainsbury and Tesco and a growing number of insurance companies.

The new 24-hour telephone-based Virgin One account will be available to Virgin Direct's 250,000 existing customers from 1 November and will open to the general public next year.

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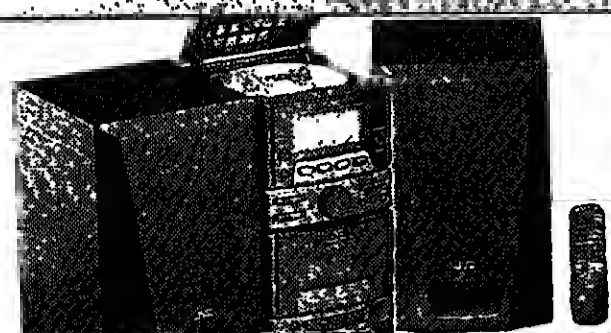
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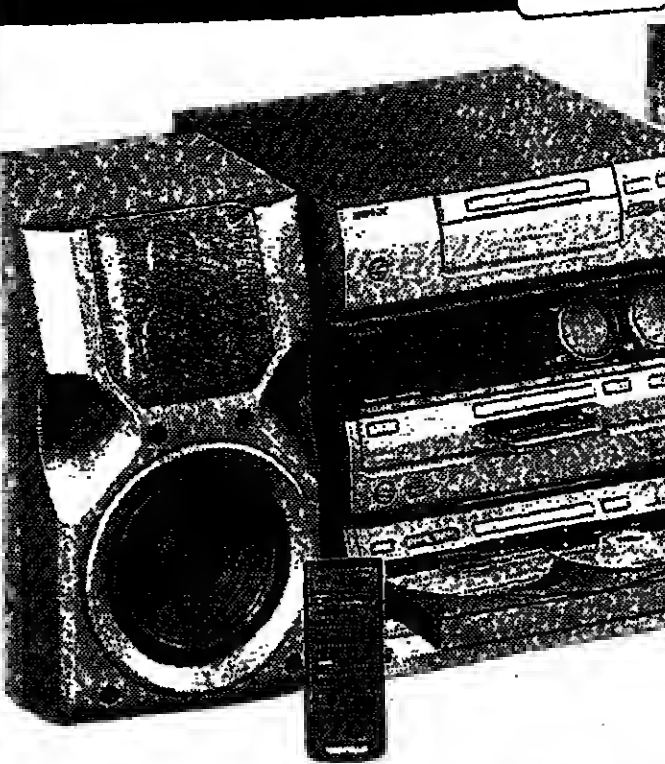
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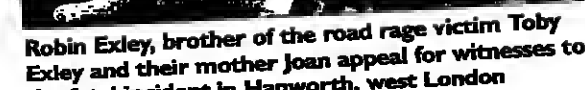
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Accounts differ as bank staff strike

the car which rained it. However, the fact that its rear had to be cut off by the firefighters who freed Mr Exley and Miss Martin means valuable evidence might have been accidentally destroyed.

□ Anyone with information asked to contact police on 0181 247 6377 or 0181 247 6343, or Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.



A spokeswoman for Barclay's poured scorn on union claims. She said 5,000 employees at most had joined the action since the 1985 franchise

Only 209 out of 1983 branches had been closed and they were shut for security reasons. There was no significant impact on Barclaycard or the telephone banking service, she said.

The spokeswoman concerned

ed however that there was a
ruption in parts of the north
west of England, south London
and South Wales.
— *Barrie Clemen*

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Rat tsar to clear

هكذا من الأصل

هكذا من الأصل

Lead pipe poison threat to poor

Water companies will have to spend £2bn replacing lead pipes in order to comply with a new European law on safe drinking water. But, says Environment Correspondent Nicholas Schoon, hundreds of thousands of people, many of them on low incomes, could still end up with water containing too much lead.

European environment ministers agreed this week to enforce a much tougher standard for lead in drinking water. The heavy metal has long been known to be a potent poison for brains and nerves, stunting the mental development of children at even low concentrations.

The current standard, under the old drinking water directive, is 50 micrograms of lead per litre. The new one, part of a revised directive, is set at 10µg. To be achieved across the union within 15 years. An interim standard of 25µg will have to be hit within five years.

It is estimated that about 8 million homes – a third of all in Britain – receive water with lead above this new standard, which brings Europe into line with recommendations from the World Health Organisation. That is because the homes have lead piping, and are in soft water areas where the acidity dissolves out the metal. The water industry has already begun

replacing lead piping that connects the mains to individual buildings, and will spend £2bn on the task. According to the Water Services Association, which represents nine of the 10 regional water companies, every lead connecting pipe will be replaced.

But a question remains over what happens to the lead piping inside homes which, in some areas, will also have to be removed in order for the new standard to be met. The water companies are quick to point out that this is not their responsibility but that of the householder.

It costs about £400 to replace the most important section of piping, running from the boundary of the property to the kitchen tap. Yet the Government is not considering any extra grants for the work, beyond the very limited ones available for low income households through local councils.

People who ought to replace their own piping in order to meet the new standard will be given advice by the Government's Drinking Water Inspectorate, and the water companies. Many people, especially the elderly and less well off, will not want to pay for the work. But both the Government and the companies say there is nothing they can do, beyond giving the best advice. That includes letting the tap run for a minute in the morning to get rid of the high lead levels that have built up overnight.

Michael Meacher, the environment minister, said: "Householders will be offered advice to help them take an informed decision on options for action if they have lead pipes."



Strange habit: Friars climbing over sandbags placed by ground staff at Aylesford Priory, near Maidstone in Kent, to protect the 13th-century listed building – home to a community of Carmelite monks – against flooding by water from the nearby banks of the River Medway. Photograph: Brian Harris

UK faces action for failing to implement EU rules

While new laws are passed by Europe, Britain and other EU nations have been caught out failing to implement the existing ones. The UK has been warned that it faces prosecution in the European Court and possible fines for its shortcomings, writes Katherine Butler.

Slamming governments for paying lip-service to the environment yesterday the European Commission exposed 10 member states, including Britain, for infringement of the bloc's flagship environmental law.

The 15 governments have had more than five years ago to implement a directive which aims to protect endangered rare natural habitats – the continent's wildlife "jewels in the crown". Their failure to do so leaves the 10 facing referral to the European Court unless they take action within weeks.

The Commission also took the unusual step of publicly announcing that it is opening legal proceedings against Britain and 12 other member states for

failure to implement legislation on waste signed up to six years ago.

This announcement took British officials by surprise, as the usual procedure is for Brussels to first write to the member state reminding it of its obligations under the European Union treaty and to open proceedings only when this fails.

But the Commission is clearly impatient with foot dragging by governments who although boastful on the world stage of their commitment to meeting the great environmental challenges such as climate change, systematically fail to apply their own rules.

Environment ministers who make the law were obviously coming to Brussels "for a free lunch" rather than because they had any commitment to the environment, Peter Jorgensen a Commission spokesman said.

"There is clearly something wrong with the willingness of member states to implement decisions they themselves have taken," said Mr Jorgensen, citing a long list of environmental legislation where court proceedings are now pending.

Yesterday's announcements come in an attempt to shame the accused into action partic-

ularly on endangered habitats. Britain's transgression, according to the Commission, is its failure to submit a complete national list of the sites to be included in an EU habitats network.

Other nations, especially France and Germany, have a worse record on implementing the habitats directive.

Natural woodlands or sand dune systems designated by governments are given legal protection, for example, against over-use by farmers. Habitats of endangered plant and animal species such as otters or certain orchids, are also supposed to be covered by the directive.

British officials said the Government's decision to hold public consultations on the sites to be designated for special protection had slowed the process.

So far, 255 British sites covering, for example, the River Derwent in Cumbria, the Devils Dyke semi-natural grassland in Cambridgeshire and the submerged sea caves at Rathlin Island, Co Antrim, have been notified to the Commission.

A further list is expected to be ready by the end of the year, but the Commission says this rate of progress is too slow.

Rat tsar needed to clear sewers

The time may be ripe for a 'rat tsar' to crack down on the booming population of rodents, a conference in London heard yesterday.

The water companies – whose sewage pipes they lurk in – and local council environmental health officers agree that they are failing to coordinate and current systems of pest control are inadequate.

Before privatisation, councils and the old, state-owned water authorities had a much closer working relationship. Now water companies complain that the councils do not notify them about rat infestations when the sewers are a likely source. Councils allege that the water companies are no longer regularly putting poison bait in the sewers.

The problems emerged at a conference in London devoted to rats and sewers. Some delegates felt central Government should take the lead role in bringing the two groups together and drawing up a new code of rat-busting standards and practices.

Stephen Battenby, of Surrey University's Roberts Centre for Environmental Health, complained that the new crop of ministers showed little interest. The centre had asked for one to attend to give the Government's view, but none came.

He believes the new, plastic pipes used in sewers may be less rat-resistant than the old cast iron ones, and poor workmanship when installing drains may be a factor.

— Nicholas Schoon

Badger killers convicted by DNA

Four men were yesterday jailed for five months after being found guilty of killing a protected animal in the RSPCA's first badger case, using DNA evidence.

Garry Shaw, Garry Pettipierre, Michael Holland and David Wragg were found guilty at Bakewell Magistrates court, Derbyshire, of offences under the 1992 Protection of Badgers Act, which included digging out a badger and killing it. The men, all from Derbyshire, were bailed pending an appeal at crown court.

Gathering enough evidence to prosecute a person for ill-treating badgers had previously been virtually impossible. Unless a culprit was caught red-handed, it was very difficult to produce enough evidence to bring them to court.

Although nobody saw the four men committing the crime, a passer-by spotted them near the sett where the animal's body lay, and called the RSPCA and police.

DNA testing showed blood stains on the men's clothing and a knife had come from the animal. The court also heard Wragg and Holland were active members of field-sports societies and ordered that dogs belonging to all the men be forfeited.

An RSPCA spokeswoman, Jo Crozier, said: "If it hadn't been for DNA testing, we would never have been able to prove that it was these men who killed the animal, even though they were found only 600 yards from the body. All we would have had was circumstantial evidence and that wouldn't have been strong enough to convict them." Since 1986 there have been 271 convictions of badger offences by the RSPCA but animal-welfare groups now hope increasing use of DNA testing will help make many more.

— Amanda Kelly

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Chemical victim wins partial victory

Campaigners against the use of organophosphate pesticides claimed a victory yesterday when a judge ruled that a farmhand was made ill by his exposure to the chemicals.

John Hill, who arrived in court in a wheelchair, had claimed that his loss of memory and other symptoms were due to chronic chemical poisoning from treating crops with the OP insecticide, Actellic D.

Mr Hill, 60, is seeking damages after being dismissed by his employer William Tomkins Ltd, of Peterborough.

But the 106-page written judgement by Mrs Justice Smith did not represent a total triumph for Mr Hill. The judge ruled that some of his continuing symptoms were due to other factors.

"My findings are in general that he has suffered ill-effects from his exposure to Actellic D in 1993, and some of his continuing symptoms are attributable to that exposure, but some of them are in part attributable to psychological factors and have, at times, been exaggerated by him and his wife in description to doctors - and have also on occasions been affected by the frequency with which he has been examined by doctors," she said.

William Tomkins Ltd admitted that it exposed Mr Hill to Actellic D and that he suffered an adverse reaction to it.

But it argued that the effects of the exposure were short-lived and that any long-term ill health from which he had suffered since 1993 had not been caused or contributed to by his exposure.

It is likely that the two sides will come to an agreement on damages.

Elizabeth Sigmund, co-ordinator of the OP Information Network, said: "This is much more than just a partial victory. The contention was that Mr Hill was neurotic and a hypochondriac. The judge has accepted that he has got real psychiatric damage."

Organophosphates have been blamed for inducing chronic fatigue, depression, panic attacks and memory loss in those who are exposed to them without adequate protection.

The most frequent complainants are farmers who have used the chemicals on sheep dips or as insecticides on crops. Hundreds of Gulf War veterans have claimed they were made ill by their exposure to OP sprays, used to kill desert pests.

— Ian Burrell



Britfrodic Charlotte Flyvholm, Rachel Kirby, Chloe Webb, Caroline Salisbury and 'Stina' Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

Britain's fresh-faced followers of fashion

The British fashion world unveiled five supermodels of the future yesterday to help fly the flag for the industry.

The public was treated to a rare glimpse of the girls - including three 14-year-olds - as they took time off from school.

Wrapped in Union Jacks, the fledgling pack was helping to promote next week's 1997 Lloyds Bank Fashion Awards.

Chloe Webb, Charlotte

Flyvholm and Rachel Kirby, all 14, appeared undaunted by the publicity. They have all shot to the top of the industry after being discovered last year.

Rachel's mother, Gaye

Kirby, from north London, insisted her daughter still had her "feet on the ground" despite shooting to international success. "She is doing her GCSEs next year, this is just fun for her, it is acting."

Warder's mystery death 'accidental'

A prison officer found strapped in his car in a river two years after vanishing died as a result of a road accident, a coroner decided yesterday. William Morris said there was no evidence that Peter Curran, 38, of March, Cambridgeshire, had been the victim of foul play, and recorded a verdict of accidental death.

But lawyers for his widow, Christine, said they would push for a new inquest before a jury. Mr Curran, a guard at Whitmore top-security prison, near March, disappeared on 14 May 1995 after being suspended over allegations that he smuggled toiletries to prisoners. He was found in a river near Chatteris, Cambridgeshire, on 12 February this year. He vanished eight months after a break-out by IRA prisoners from Whitmore and his car was recovered a month after a trial linked to the escape collapsed.

Mr Curran has suggested he might have been murdered because he knew of the break-out. But Mr Morris said any suggestion of foul play was at best inference and conjecture. Det Chief Insp Trevor Bracken said no evidence of any criminal act had been uncovered at any stage.

The hearing, at Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, was told Mr Curran was distressed after being suspended. He left home in his car one Sunday morning, telling his wife he was going to play golf, although he did not take his clubs. He was never seen again. Police told the inquest the fenland road along which he was thought to have driven after leaving home was notoriously dangerous.

Cars regularly left the road and plunged into the river running alongside, killing their occupants. Mr Morris concluded that Mr Curran had probably been involved in such an accident. "This would not have been the first time where a single vehicle has left the road on that stretch," he said. "I have in mind that Mr Curran would probably have had a lot on his mind. 'Any steering error in that situation, particularly if there was speed involved,' would have been disastrous."

The coroner said it was impossible to say for sure on what day Mr Curran had died because of the decomposed state of his body when it was found. But he said he thought that death had probably taken place on or about 14 May 1995 - the day Mr Curran disappeared.

DNA tests fail to trap killer

DNA testing on 169 men from a French village has failed to trap the killer of Caroline Dickinson, the British girl who was raped and murdered during a school trip last year.

Police, who have come under increasing pressure to catch the killer, said yesterday that they intend to test even more men from Pleine Fougères as they extend their inquiries to surrounding villages in northern France.

The negative results came as both a disappointment to Caroline's family and as a relief to the villagers, who have been living in a climate of suspicion.

The men, tested during a three-day period last week, were aged between 15 and 35: the age range will now be ex-

tended to include men up to 50 years old.

Caroline, 13, was killed at a youth hostel in Pleine Fougères during a trip organised by her school from Launceston, Cornwall. Her father, John, a local authority environmental health officer from Bodmin, said his family was grateful to the population of Pleine Fougères.

The family had been critical of the original French investigation which appeared to grind to a halt following the high profile arrest and then release of a vagrant picked up in the first hours after the killing.

However, since the case was handed over to a new investigating magistrate, Judge Renaud van Ruymbeke, during the summer, there has been an in-

crease in activity in the case.

"We would like to thank all the inhabitants of Pleine Fougères for their co-operation in taking part [in the testing], and hope the next wave of tests in November will be similarly supported," said Mr Dickinson.

"It is vitally important in our minds to remove the veil of suspicion from the village so equally important lines of inquiry can be examined."

"We do not feel downhearted at the negative results. We feel confident that with the determined efforts of Judge Renaud van Ruymbeke and the revitalised investigation team, the culprit will be caught in due course."

— Steve Boggan

Young brothers critical after stab attack

Two brothers, aged four and six, are critically ill after being stabbed in the neck yesterday, police said.

Adam Schofield and elder brother Daniel were attacked in their home in Lodge Street, Accrington, Lancashire. Ambulance crews were called to the house after the boys' mother went into Accrington police station to report an assault.

Both boys were taken to Blackburn Royal Infirmary. A

spokesman for Lancashire police said: "This is a tragic incident. For two boys as young as this to be stabbed is beyond belief."

"Adam is in theatre at Blackburn Royal Infirmary... the mother is with the boys and being helped by a family liaison officer."

Neighbour Margaret Gregory said: "This is a terrible thing to have happened. I've seen the boys playing out and they're lovely little chil-

dren. There doesn't seem to have been any trouble at the house before and they seemed like a nice family. I heard a bang this morning and when I saw the ambulance arrive I thought perhaps somebody had been shot. The postman later told me he had seen the house with its front door virtually ripped off, so that must have been what we heard."

A man is helping police with their inquiries.

Dixons

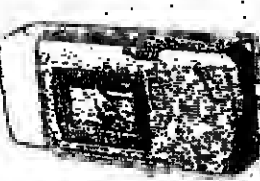
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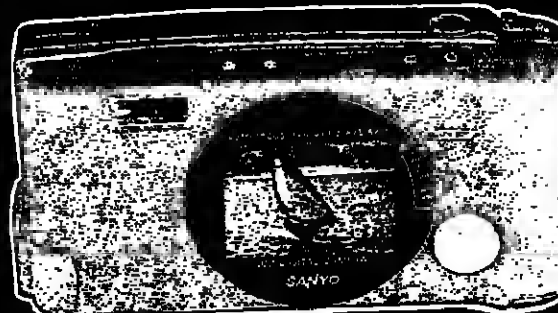
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مکان من الأصل

Gay sex story lines spell an uncertain future for *This Life*

That's life: Viewers hoping to see Anna, Miles and the rest of the gang return to their screens in the near future may be disappointed

The four million fans of *This Life*, the television cult sensation, face a further wait now that plans for a third series have ground to a halt. David Lister, Arts News Editor, reports that an attempt to inject more gay romance into scripts was partly to blame.

It topped BBC2's ratings and kept millions glued to the television. But it is understood that plans for a new series of *This Life*, the love and career dramas of a bunch of twentysomethings sharing a south London house, have gone on hold with no immediate prospect of production work beginning. BBC chiefs are said to be furious at the prospect of losing

such a ratings winner. But the show is made by independent production company World Productions, run by Tony Garnett, the 61-year-old producer whose credits stretch back to *Cathy Come Home* in the Sixties.

It is understood that the current impasse has arisen after falling out with newly-signed scriptwriter Mark Ravenhill. Ravenhill, 31, is the playwright who wrote west end hit *Shopping And Fucking*, which with its cocktail of drugs and sex including gay sex, drew a large audience of young people, and was dubbed the "Transporting of the South".

People involved in *This Life* say that Ravenhill's draft scripts had brought in a completely different cast of characters from the ones previously sharing the Southwark flat. And though there was one gay love story in the last series, the next series

would have had a much greater emphasis on gay storylines. One source said yesterday: "It is safe to say that gay sex would have been an ongoing theme."

Tony Garnett was said to be unhappy with the draft scripts and Ravenhill has now parted company with him. There are not thought to be any further plans to return to the project.

A spokeswoman at World Productions said yesterday: "I think Mark Ravenhill may have left. We don't know at the moment whether there will be a third series or not. We don't know what is happening."

Mark Ravenhill's agent Mel Kenyon said: "There is nothing to say about this. It is an administrative thing and a matter for World Productions."

A BBC spokesman said that no decision had yet been taken on whether plans for a third series had been scrapped.

Audience swoons as Amis puffs

Martin Amis took out a cigarette paper, loaded it with tobacco, struck a match and began. The hall, filled with literature-lovers, who had never seen someone smoke on stage before, were in awe.

From *The Rachel Papers* to the latest offering, *Night Train*, everyone had their favourites. Although *Night Train*, the tricky new novel about an American homicide detective, written, no less, in the first person female, was the one they had come to hear.

And they weren't disappointed, he seduced them with a reading, explaining the colloquialisms as he went, willing them to believe in her. But how, they wanted to know, had a straight, middle-class Englishman, who had fathered four children, come to write a book where he had mentally transplanted himself into the opposite sex?

He had been prodded into it, by his subconscious, as with all his novels, and simply couldn't resist. "I thought to myself," he elaborated,

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whole afternoon on a line-break is just not me. I think, I say to myself, that's not a poem, that's a paragraph."

The praise wasn't just reserved for his father, however. Martin also insisted that the audience rush out and buy a novel entitled *Underworld* by an American writer called Don DeLillo, a writer he feels sure is going to be the Next Big American novelist. And what of the other young Amises coming through? Martin had been in a bookshop recently with his 10-year-old son Jacob, and they had paused by a shelf full of his work. "He announced to me that if he were to become a novelist, he wasn't planning to write the kind of things that I wrote. I



Gender-bender: Martin Amis, whose latest book is written from the perspective of a woman

"After I've finished my tea, I'm going to go upstairs to my study and become a woman. And I did."

The process of writing, of being a novelist, spending time locked away for hours on end, was what keeps him sane, he claimed. "I don't know how you can bear not to be a novelist," he opined to the audience. It was the way he made sense of the world. It was also virtually a family business, except that his father, Kingsley, never encouraged him, something for which Martin was eternally grateful. "I have seen famous fathers pushing their sons to achieve, and essentially I think it says more about the father's ego than anything else. It's wrong."

Kingsley, who gave up reading Martin's books because he didn't like his style, "except he admired *Time's Arrow* - well, he read it at least - would have bristled at the idea but his son believes they are alike. As one, almost.

"I think that if our birthdays had been transferred I would have written his novels and he would have written mine. Except that he also wrote poetry, which I rarely do. I have had two poems published, but I don't really have the patience for poetry. To concentrate a

said, 'Oh, so what will you write, then?' He pause, before he answered, and then said, 'Teenage Horror'. This is now a term that has entered our family language and will probably come in particularly handy when he and his brother get a little older."

It is certainly a term that came to mind later when we were introduced to the art historian Sir Roy Strong, and reminded that he was at school with Norman Tebbit. A horror for any teenager, yet the amusing Sir Roy seems to have survived. He had come to Cheltenham to read extracts from his infamous diaries, taking as his theme, Extraordinary Women. From Lady Diana Cooper to Diana, Princess of Wales, the man who revolutionised our national art institutions, and consumed a lot of posh dinners along the way, was as indiscreet and charming as ever.

When he first met Margaret Thatcher, he reminisced, she wittered on to him about her Worcester porcelain collection. "It was really the only thing she was interested in. So when she became Prime Minister, we sent a truck-load of the stuff round. Dreadful, really, but she turned out to be a great ally."

— Sam Taylor

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Pupils skip lunchbreaks to revive a 'dead' language



Willing to learn: Jan Compson with the lunchtime Latin club at Belle Vue primary school. Photograph: Mike Scott/NTI

Children as young as seven are giving up their lunchbreaks to learn to speak Latin. Kathy Marks says that a new initiative to introduce the language of Ovid and Tacitus into state primary schools is proving to be an unexpected success.

For the 30 or so pupils who attend Minimus Club every Thursday lunchtime at Belle Vue Primary School, Latin is anything but a dead language. "Salve, Esthera sum," says nine-year-old Esther Berry, introducing herself over the telephone.

Minimus is a new Latin course, based around the first modern textbook to be designed specifically for children aged 7 to 10. It is being piloted this term in 20 schools and is likely to be taken up by dozens of others.

Minimus (small mouse) is the name of a pet kept by an imaginary family around which the textbook revolves. The family - mother, father and offspring, plus three slaves, mouse and cat (Thirsa, meaning Whiskers) - live in Roman Britain, in a camp near Hadrian's Wall.

A series of stories in cartoon form introduce pupils to the rudiments of Latin language and grammar, incorporating elements of Roman civilisation and culture, and even a dash of Greek mythology.



A strip from the cartoon stories that introduce pupils to Latin grammar

The aim is to make Latin fun and accessible to young children, and to give them a taste of what classicists believe are its wider educational benefits.

Latin was already taught in some primaries, but very patchily, and mainly in the private sector. The new project is the first concerted attempt to bring it into state schools, and has the warm support of the David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education and Employment.

The textbook was written by Barbara Bell, secretary of the Joint Association of Classical Teachers, which is dedicated to keeping interest in Greek and Latin alive.

"I hope it will give Latin a whole new image, that children will see that it is not a dreary subject," said Mrs Bell.

She believes that the study of Latin enriches education in several ways. "The language itself is very precise and structured, so it helps with many other languages, including English," she said.

"The literature is second to none, and the civilisation is our history. The Romans came here and conquered us, and we can see the effects all around us."

The problem for schools like Belle Vue primary - based at Stourbridge in the West Midlands and one of seven state primaries involved in the pilot - is finding space for Latin in a crowded National Curriculum. As a consequence, many are teaching it as an optional lunchtime or after-school club.

Belle Vue's head teacher, Jan Compson, said she was taken aback by the number of children who attended voluntarily. "I would never have expected them to be so enthusiastic," she said. "I took it on as an experiment, but it has really fired their imaginations."

Esther Berry said: "When I first heard about the Latin, I thought it would be really boring. But it's really good. I can speak to my friends in a different language. I said hello to my granny in Latin the other day and she was really surprised."

Eight-year-old Christopher Casey said he enjoyed finding out what the Romans got up to. "I like saying the Latin words," he said. "I play football or play with my friends in other lunchtimes, but I prefer going to the Minimus Club."

Cash threat to sixth forms

The Government is considering finding reforms which would see schools penalised for the first time for pupils who drop out. The changes, designed to end competition with colleges, could put hundreds of small sixth forms out of business.

The proposals follow complaints from colleges that the present system leaves them disadvantaged in the race for students. Under changes being discussed by ministers, 16-18 year-olds in school sixth forms would be funded on the same basis as those in sixth form colleges and further education colleges.

At present, colleges receive their money for each student in three tranches. A small portion of the cash is paid when the student enrolls, the lion's share comes while he or she is studying, and a final small amount is received only if the student takes final exams.

The system is designed to ensure colleges do not recruit students who will swiftly drop

out, and provides an incentive to ensure they stay the course. Schools, however, receive full funding for each pupil automatically from their local education authority providing the pupil is on roll at the time of an annual census in January.

Colleges complain that the system means schools are not penalised when pupils drop out part way through a course.

In 1995-6 the funding for a student taking three A-levels is around £7,000 in a school, £6,400 in a general FE college and £6,640 in a sixth form college. Under the proposals being considered by Baroness Blackstone, the education minister, schools would use the same funding system as colleges. The question of whether the level of funding should also be brought into line is still to be resolved, though this could lead to the closure of small sixth forms which could not survive under tighter funding.

— Lucy Ward

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Anger greets Ulster march proposal

The Government wants to avoid a recurrence of highly disruptive annual loyalist parades, such as the Drumcree march. David McKittrick, Ireland Correspondent, outlines both the new legislation announced yesterday and the criticisms which greeted it.

Mo Mowlam, The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, yesterday gave details of the powers which the Government intends to give to a parades commission in an attempt to avert more Drumcree-style clashes next summer.

Under the proposed legislation, the commission will take over from the Royal Ulster

Constabulary's responsibility for making decisions on contested parades. It will be able to order re-routings and to impose conditions on marches. It will also encourage "mediation and education" on the parades issue.

Large-scale disruption has been experienced for the last three summer marching seasons in Northern Ireland, centring around the traditional but bitterly-contested Drumcree Orange march through a Catholic district of Portadown, Co Armagh.

There have also been lesser disputes in a number of other areas, typically where loyalist marchers have attempted to go through districts which were once predominantly Protestant but which over the years have become Catholic.

The cumulative effect has by common consent been highly damaging to community relations. This led the last Tory government to commission a detailed report on the marches issue and in its wake to establish the Parades Commission. This body was however given no real powers.

The RUC has for years asked to be relieved of some of its decision-making powers on the grounds that these have placed the force in no-win positions. The commission will take some of the weight off the force, though the legislation will provide police with a reserve power "to take whatever steps are necessary on the day to preserve public order".

The Secretary of State will retain the power to ban parades, either individually or on a blanket basis. This means in

effect the responsibility for parades will be split three ways between the Government, the police and the Parades Commission.

Sinn Féin gave the proposals a guarded welcome, but most Unionist and loyalist organisations went on the attack. The Orange Order described the legislation as draconian, claiming it had been heavily influenced by the Irish government. It added: "There is nothing in this legislation for us and we reject totally the thinking that allows our faith, tradition, and culture to be treated with such contempt."

The Rev Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party described the commission as contemptible, claiming: "This is about eroding Protestant culture." The Ulster Unionist Party leader, David Trimble, ex-

pressed deep reservations, saying he was sceptical whether the commission could establish any credibility. He added: "Frankly I don't think they are capable of discharging the function they had been given."

The strength of Unionist reaction to the proposed legislation, if it is maintained at this initial level, raised questions over whether marchers will accept the authority of the Commission.

● The wife of the Northern Ireland peace talks chairman, Senator George Mitchell, has given birth to a baby boy at a hospital in New York City. The man in charge of the talks flew back from Belfast to be at the side of his wife Heather, 37, when their son Andrew MacLachlan weighed in at 7lb 14oz.

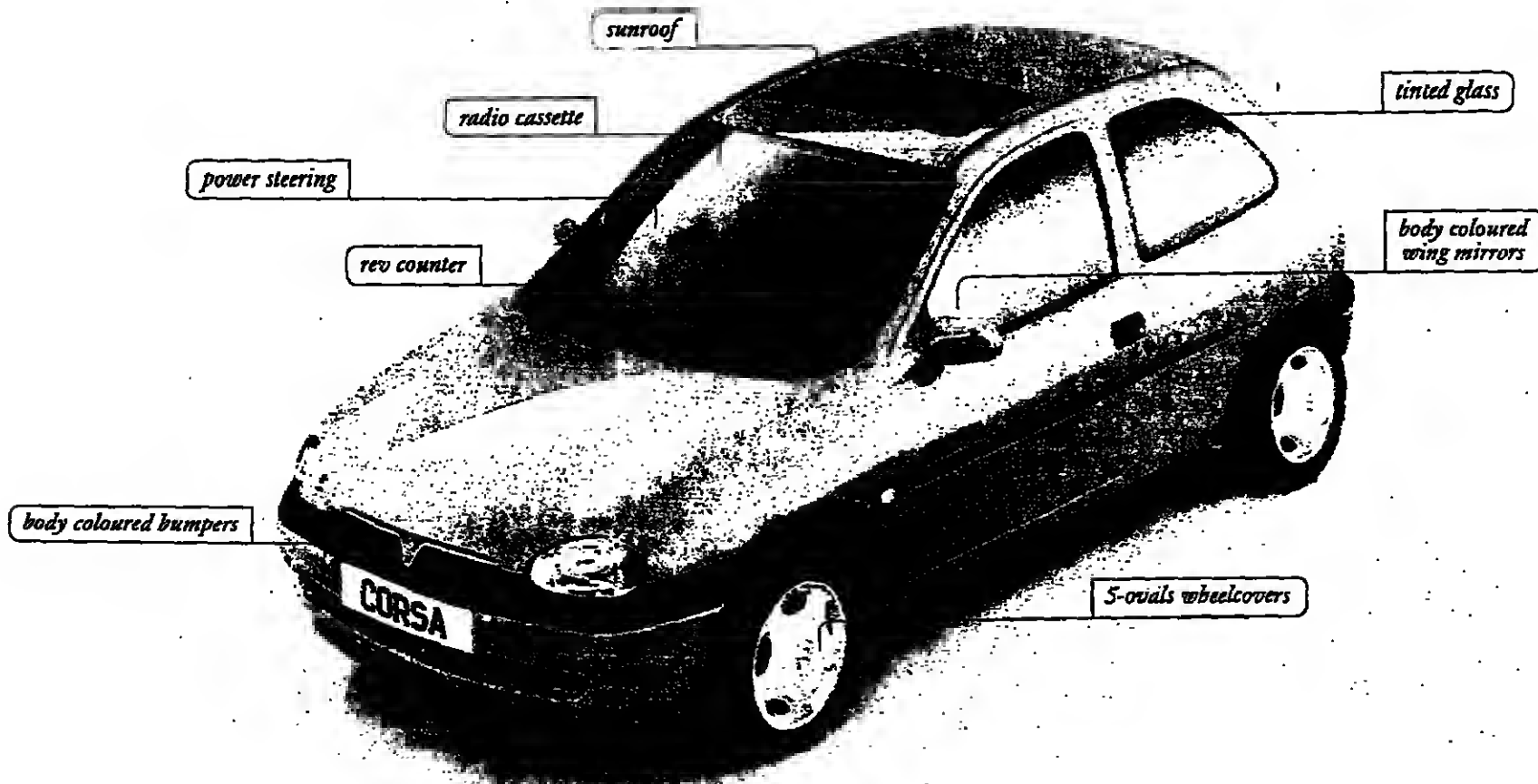
Senator Mitchell, 64, has a daughter by his first marriage.



Loyalists parading down Belfast's Ormeau Road

Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

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THE CORSA BREEZE FROM VAUXHALL

Whitehall press chiefs defy 'purge'

More government press officers could be moved or retired early in the 'purge' to modernise the Whitehall information machine. Colin Brown, Chief Political Correspondent, discovers that some of the victims have formed a 'Tumbrel Club'.

The Whitehall veterans who are being "culled" in the drive to sharpen up the presentation of the Government's message are keeping a sense of humour about the bloodletting.

The "Tumbrel Club" has been formed by some of the victims as a mark of defiance at the brutal way they feel they are being treated. Rumours were circulating in Whitehall yesterday that at least two more heads could roll. One of the people thought to be under threat said: "I am happy where I am, and I am staying." But that may not be the final word.

John Redwood, a Shadow Cabinet spokesman, accused the Government of attempting to replace information officers with "puppets who dance to the tune of new Labour secrecy."

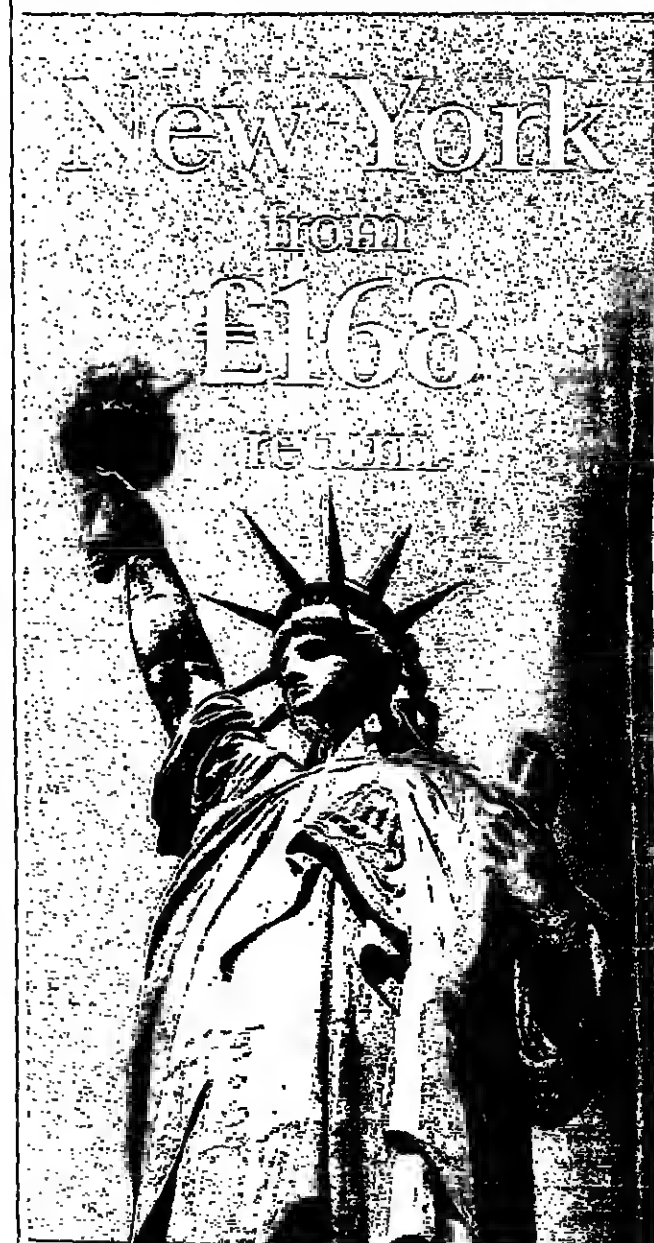
The unions representing the civil servants do not accept that charge, and have signalled their

readiness to respond to the need for improvements in presenting government announcements, including seeing some press officers work with civil servants on policy development.

However, suspicions were raised about a "purge" after the axe fell on Whitehall press chiefs who clashed with their ministers, while others appeared to jump before they were pushed. But Alastair Campbell, the Prime Minister's press secretary, is determined to keep up the pace of change, which could produce more members for the "Tumbrel Club".

Women members are being offered a scarf and men offered ties with the club's own motif - "a guillotine rampant" and a tumbrel, like the cart used in the French revolution to take away the bourgeoisie for beheading. Andy Wood, one of its members, said: "We thought it would be a nice idea. We might have a Christmas Party as well."

Seven heads of the Government Information Service have qualified by resigning, being moved, or offered early retirement. Mr Wood, director of information at the Northern Ireland Office, was called in by the permanent secretary to be told that there was a "lack of chemistry" with Mo Mowlam, the Secretary of State. Since then, he has been on what Whitehall insiders call "gardening leave".



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Scotland's dilemma over site for new parliament

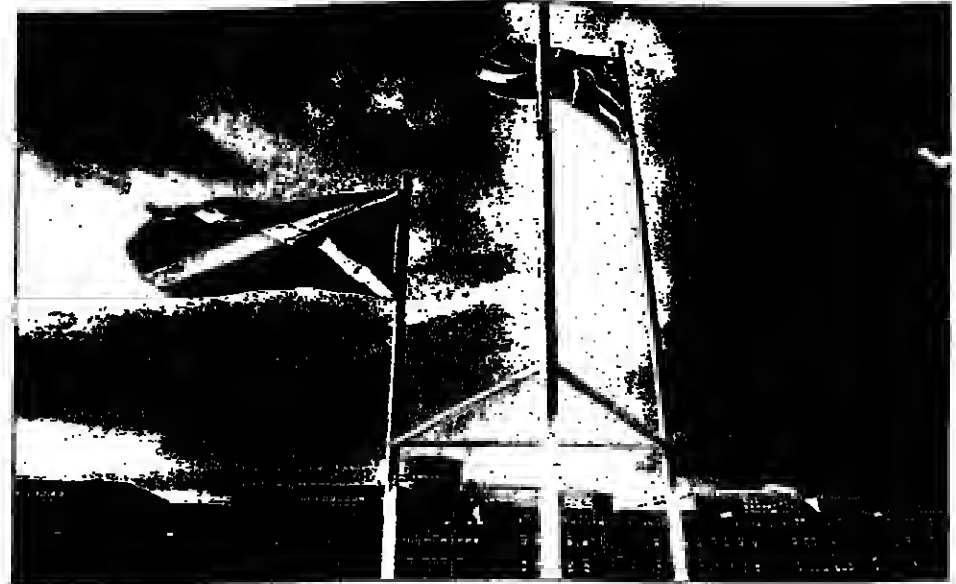
Choosing a site for Scotland's first Parliament for 300 years is taking longer than planned. Two feasibility studies announced by Donald Dewar yesterday have put back any decision until probably the New Year. Stephen Goodwin looks at the dilemma confronting the Scottish Secretary.

The lesson of the National Monument on Edinburgh's Calton Hill will not be lost on Donald Dewar as he agonises over the best location for Scotland's home rule Parliament.

Conceived as a memorial to the dead of the Napoleonic wars the monument is also a warning to those who embark on grandiose projects they cannot afford to complete. William Henry Playfair based his design on the Parthenon in Athens. Building began in 1822, but then the money ran out, leaving a more "distressed" reproduction than the great architect intended.

Cost and a desire not to tarnish Scotland's new politics with extravagance seem to have been the factors uppermost in Mr Dewar's mind. "We don't need a building like Kublai Khan's pleasure dome," he said last week. It was said the Secretary of State favoured a site beyond the city limits at Leith docks, next to the new Scottish Office headquarters. It would be the equivalent of transferring the House of Commons to Docklands, but at least on a brown-field site the dangers of a cost-overrun would be lessened.

However, public pressure appears to be pushing Mr Dewar towards Calton Hill, an up-thrust of volcanic rock rich in national symbolism at the heart of the capital. Yesterday as he ordered further work on site



Flying the flag: Scottish Office mandarins want Parliament located next to their HQ at Leith

selection Mr Dewar said his mind remained open.

"Choosing a site for Parliament - and the kind of building it will occupy - is a tremendously important decision for Scotland. We must make the right choice," he said. A decision had been expected next week but the two design feasibility studies and traffic and environmental statements called for by Mr Dewar will mean considerable delay.

Three sites are in the frame: Leith docks, proposed by Forth Ports, owners of the land, with a £30m scheme; a gap site at Haymarket, west of the city centre, with a £26m glass Parliament; and Calton Hill, with a complex spread across the former Royal High School and the old civil service headquarters, St Andrew's House.

For decades it was taken for granted that the 19th-century school on Calton Hill's southern flank would become the seat of devolved government. The vigil for a Scottish Parliament was camped outside the school gates for 1,980 days until the successful referendum vote. And over the past 20 years

some £6m of public money has been spent adapting the building and holding it in readiness.

But in July it emerged that Mr Dewar was concerned about the cost of settling on Calton Hill and was looking elsewhere. Though the school's horseshoe debating chamber could accommodate the 129 MSPs, there was not enough room for the public, press and 200 staff.

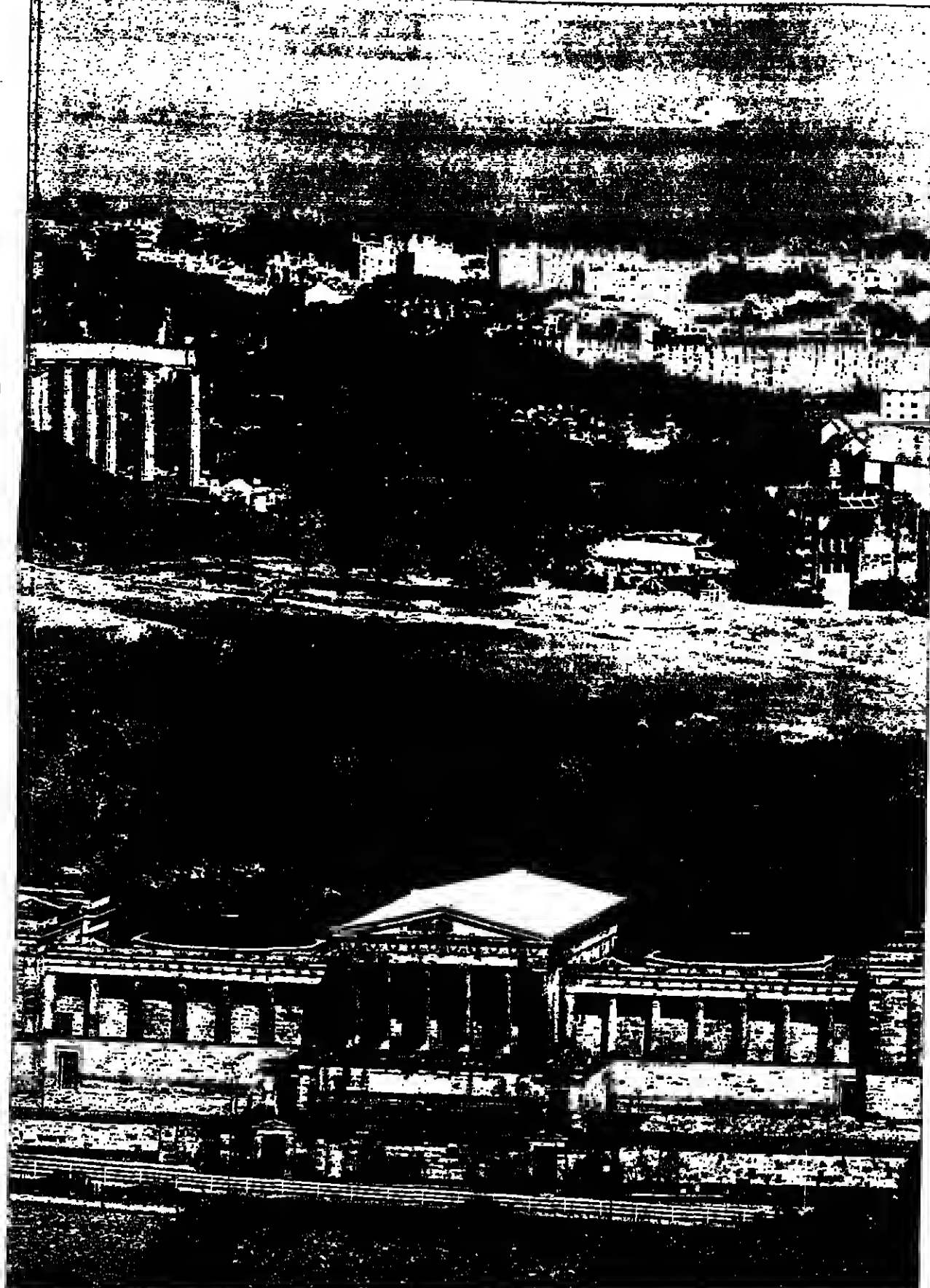
None the less, Calton Hill remains the choice of the Edinburgh establishment. ED1, a development and investment company owned by the city council, wants to turn the hill and the surrounding area into a government quarter. The company maintains the sprawling site could be developed within the £40m limit set by ministers.

ED1 and Forth Ports both made final submissions to Mr Dewar yesterday, shortly before his announcement. City councillors are pressing their case on two fronts; the Scottish people would "expect their parliament to be in a location they can be proud of" and ease of access by public transport. It is reckoned 75 per cent of staff would use bus or train to get to either Cal-

ton Hill or Haymarket, but about the same percentage would commute by car if the Parliament goes to Leith.

Apart from Forth Ports, the only people said to favour Leith are Scottish Office civil servants. The Parliament would be next door to their headquarters and form part of a massive "Ocean Terminal" development with cruise liners would berth alongside. Mr Dewar has also bowed to demands from the Scottish National Party and the Liberal Democrats for consultation over the site. "Co-operation served the nation well at the recent referendum," he said.

Forth Ports and the developers behind the Haymarket, Kaniel and MacDonald Orr, say their parliaments could be ready by the 1999 deadline. But architects and professionals within the Scottish Office are sceptical. Would-be MSPs can prepare themselves for a peripatetic early life. They could be using the Royal High School, the city council chambers or even Parliament Hall, seat of the legislature dissolved by the Act of Union in 1707 and now part of the law courts.



favoured site: Donald Dewar is under mounting public pressure to choose Calton Hill

Photographs: Colin McPerson

Labour braced for a dirty fight in Paisley South campaign

The Paisley South by-election began yesterday with a battle for the high ground over unemployment. Colin Brown, Chief Political Correspondent, predicts it will not be long before the dirt starts flying.

An aide to Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, yesterday launched Labour's campaign to retain its seat in the Paisley South by-election by promoting a positive message about the Government's welfare-to-work programme.

Douglas Alexander, a 30-year-old lawyer who has acted as a speech writer to Mr Brown, is fighting the seat on the Government's record, and party sources said their by-election strategy was to fight on the issues.

But Labour Party strategists are also prepared for a dirty fight in the by-election which was caused by the death of

Gordon McMaster, who left a suicide note accusing a fellow Labour MP, Tommy Graham - since suspended pending an inquiry - of running a smear campaign against him.

Mr Alexander made a pre-emptive strike to stop the other parties turning the by-election campaign into a public inquiry into allegations of corruption in the Labour Party in Scotland. On the eve of launching his campaign, he said he would accept no bad behaviour in the party, and gave his total backing to the National Executive Committee which had suspended councillors in Glasgow in an earlier inquiry into "sleaze".

Alistair Darling, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, who was in Paisley South to support Mr Alexander, said Labour's campaign could not ignore the two inquiries in Glasgow and Renfrewshire which are going on while the by-election on 6 November is being fought. "We will address it as much as we see fit, but we shall fight this by-election on the

Government's record and what can be done for Paisley South," he told party workers.

A party source said: "I know there will be efforts by the other parties to keep it on alleged sleaze but the problem they will have is that it has all been written up before. There will come a point when people will start asking them what are they going to do about the issues. There is no more to be written on the 'filth' allegations. It is the subject of internal inquiries which are going on. We are going to fight on the issues."

However, William Hague, the Tory leader, made it clear at his party's conference last week in Blackpool that they will be seeking to turn the tables on Labour by campaigning against "Labour sleaze" in local government. The Tories are expected to use the by-election to raise the suspension of leading Labour councillors in Glasgow over allegations that they accepted free foreign trips at the ratepayers' expense in return for their votes.

There have also been unsubstantiated allegations of organised crime links with the Labour Party in Paisley. The Labour MP for the neighbouring Paisley North seat, Irene Adams, a close friend of Mr McMaster, has waged a war against drug dealers and has received death threats.

The Scottish National Party will be launching its campaign next week, and Labour is not being complacent about holding the seat, in which Mr McMaster had a majority of 12,750 at the general election, with a swing of 3.9 per cent from the SNP to Labour.

Meanwhile, Donald Dewar, Secretary of State for Scotland, said he was delaying a decision on the site for the new Scottish Parliament.

He has faced intense lobbying on behalf of three locations, but he denied the delay means he is bowing to public pressure in favour of it being built at the rear of St Andrew's House, the Scottish Office building at Calton Hill in the centre of Edinburgh.

Blair, Kohl to discuss single currency

Tony Blair will meet the German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, at Chequers on Monday for private talks which are expected to centre on Britain's entry into the single European currency.

The Prime Minister's office yesterday underlined the sensitivity of the talks following recent speculation about the question of Britain's membership of the single currency by refusing to confirm the agenda for the meeting.

Downing Street said it was unlikely that Chancellor Kohl would repeat the trip he made with John Major to a local pub outside Chequers, strengthening the impression that the two leaders will be concentrating on the negotiations surrounding

the single currency. The Government has insisted there has been no change of policy, but there have been reports that the Prime Minister is expected to make it clear before the end of the year that while Britain cannot make the first wave in 1999, it expects to join soon after, possibly by 2002.

Those reports may have been inspired by the Treasury, and Mr Kohl may want to establish whether Mr Blair is as enthusiastic for entry as the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, if the conditions are right.

The decision of the Bundesbank to raise interest rates showed German determination to make sure the single currency is not as "soft" as feared.

Mr Blair may be seeking to test the water with Mr Kohl over how far Britain can maintain its influence within the EU while remaining outside the single currency for its first few years.

Whitehall sources have told *The Independent* that the Government is anxious to ensure it does not lose influence after ruling out membership in the first wave.

The Prime Minister is also expected to seek Chancellor Kohl's support for Britain's plans to use the six-month EU presidency, starting in January, to complete the single market and press its own plans for greater labour flexibility throughout Europe.

Britain came under further

pressure yesterday to prepare for membership of the single currency from Yves-Thibault de Silguy, the EU commissioner for economic and financial matters. He said: "It is the responsibility of the UK government and Parliament."

"But it will be good for Europe, for all the member-states, to have the UK in the euro as soon as possible."

However, Tory frontbencher and leading Euro-sceptic John Redwood said joining the project would be "dangerous" and he urged the Prime Minister to "wake up and offer some leadership for a change" instead of just "pathetically" following the European Commission.

— Colin Brown, Chief Political Correspondent

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At risk: The skylark was yesterday declared 'bird of the year' for 1998 by the German conservation organisation Nabu. The group is publicising its concern over the endangered bird's declining stock. Photograph: Nabu/Reuters

EU pleads with Blair for quick thinking on the euro

Britain came under fresh pressure yesterday from Brussels to join the European single currency as soon as possible. Rupert Cornwell says such demands are likely to increase as the year-end deadline for countries to announce their intentions draws nearer.

The latest entreaties came from the admittedly biased source of Yves-Thibault de Silguy, the EU commissioner for economic and financial affairs, who argued Europe would benefit from early British membership. The decision lay with the British government and parliament, he declared, "but it would be good for Europe if all member states are included".

Mr de Silguy's sentiments will be repeated by the leaders of Germany and Fin-

land, both near-certain first wave Euro members, when they meet Tony Blair on Monday. Chancellor Helmut Kohl, in informal talks at Chequers early in day, and Mr Paavo Lipponen later at Downing Street, will be treated to the official line, that British entry in the first wave remains "very unlikely," but not - so far at least - categorically ruled out. Unofficially however, hints have been multiplying that the UK wants to join soon after the January 1999 launch.

Politically, the main difficulty remains that of convincing a sceptical public of the euro's merits. A poll earlier this month found 61 per cent of Britons opposed to scrapping the pound; defeat in a promised referendum before the next election would be a crushing blow for Mr Blair.

In economic terms, the principal objection is that Euro membership could see the contagion of high unemployment in Germany and France spread across the

Channel - an argument vehemently repeated yesterday by John Redwood, the shadow President of the Board of Trade and fervent Tory Euro-sceptic. But Mr de Silguy insisted European economies were picking up and the euro would make this better rather than worse. The single currency, he declared, would be "good for the economy, for investment and for growth".

Meanwhile Wim Duisenberg, the European Monetary Institute president who is likely to be the first head of the European Central Bank, said that countries who choose not to join in the January 1999 start-up "would be expected" to adhere to ERM-2, the revised exchange rate mechanism that would link the euro with the currencies of non-member EU countries. But after the humiliating exit of sterling from the original ERM in September 1992 even this limited new linking of the pound raises hackles in London.

Eta bombs Bilbao in advance of royal visit

Security was tightened in Bilbao yesterday after Basque separatists detonated explosives outside an office building a day before Spain's king and queen were due in the northern city to open the modernistic Guggenheim museum.

No one was injured in the blast, which did little damage to the apparent target - an employment office in the city centre. Eta (Basque Homeland and Freedom) guerrillas warned of the attack in a call to the radical nationalist Egin radio station, which in turn contacted police. On Monday this week Eta guerrillas shot and fatally wounded a policeman as he tried to question two men unloading flower pots from a suspicious van parked near the high-profile museum. The Guggenheim still plans to open on schedule despite the policeman's death and King Juan Carlos will still attend the inaugural ceremonies.

France at odds over work

Socialists defended French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin's plan to cut France's work week to 35 hours after President Jacques Chirac criticised the proposal, and a poll said that less than half the French support it.

At the close of a jobs conference last week, Mr Jospin said he intended to introduce the 35-hour work week by 2000 as a way to create new jobs and reduce the country's high unemployment rate. Many French employers oppose the plan, which they say would increase costs and would not deliver on promises to reduce the 12.5 per cent jobless rate. During a visit to the central city of Clermont-Ferrand on Thursday, Mr Chirac said it could not be imposed by law and needed to be negotiated.

Priest takes charge in Norway

Kjell Magne Bondevik, a teetotaler and ordained priest, took charge of Norway's first centrist government for quarter of a century with an appeal to opposition parties to co-operate responsibly with his three-party minority coalition. The coalition which has taken over after seven years of Labour rule has just 42 seats in the 165-member parliament. Its first major task will be pushing next year's budget through the legislature.

Albania remembers dictator

An Albanian village resurrected a statue of Enver Hoxha to mark the anniversary of the late communist dictator's birth, an Albanian newspaper reported.

The *Gazeta Shqiptare* daily said residents of Labinot Mal, 40 miles east of Tirana, put the 10-foot statue back up on its original site on Thursday, the date of what would have been Hoxha's 89th birthday. Hoxha, who died in 1985, kept the Balkan country isolated for decades under hardline Communist rule which came to an end in late-1990. Scores of Albanians paid homage at Hoxha's grave in Tirana's public cemetery, where his body was reburied after being exhumed from a hero's tomb in 1992.

France opens up its secret past

Pressure mounted for the full truth about France's recent past yesterday after the government announced it would open its secret archives on the hushed-up 1961 massacre of more than 200 Algerians in Paris.

Anti-racist groups, Jewish students and a police union welcomed the decision by France's Culture Minister, Catherine Trautmann, to lift the 36-year secrecy rule after accused Nazi collaborator Maurice Papon insisted police under his orders did not kill the Algerians and dump their bodies in the Seine.

Historians say Mr Papon, Paris police chief from 1958 to 1967, protected police who went on a rampage exactly 36 years ago yesterday, slaughtering Algerians protesting against a curfew he had imposed on them after rebels had killed several officers.

France's jump from examining its wartime past - the focus of Mr Papon's trial on charges of helping send Jews to Nazi death camps - to demanding the truth about the 1961 massacre showed the explosive nature of events that the political establishment long thought had been safely swept under the carpet.

The government pledged

last month to open wartime archives soon to shed more light on French collaboration in the Holocaust. "These archives and documents are open to researchers and that will permit us to know the circumstances under which these events occurred," Ms Trautmann said.

Mr Papon said the blood-bath, which in the official version caused only three deaths was caused by rival groups within Algeria's rebel National Liberation Front (FLN).

The Interior Minister, Jean-Pierre Chevènement, said he would help search for the truth and hinted that the archives contained useful material.

Ms Trautmann said she did not know what was in the archives, but said the "exceptional character" of the issue had prompted the decision to open the files to researchers.

She announced she would also draft a law to shorten some of the periods for which official papers remain secret.

Raoul Letard, who as a young policeman took part in the killings, contributed to the revision of the official version in an interview with *L'Express* magazine on Thursday which flatly contradicted Mr Papon's testimony.

— Reuters

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Armenian dead laid out in a mass grave, in a photograph taken by a German Red Cross officer in 1915

The Israelis are preparing to withdraw the name of their next proposed ambassador to Turkey. His fault is that he believes in the genocide of the Armenians. *Patrick Cockburn* in Jerusalem asks if Israel is ignoring obvious parallels between the Holocaust and the slaughter of the Armenians in the First World War to further its foreign policy goals.

ing only after Washington and Moscow. But, according to the Jerusalem weekly *Kolha'tr*, which carried out an investigation into the affair, there was no objection in the Israeli cabinet on 8 June when David Levy, the Foreign Minister, first put forward the name of Ehud Toledano, a professor of Ottoman history at Tel Aviv University, to be Israel's next ambassador to Turkey.

Turkish consent to the new appointment has been automatic. But in August it became clear that there was a problem. There was no official announcement, but at the end of the month the state-owned Turkish news agency, citing sources in the Turkish Foreign ministry, said difficulties had arisen. It said "In 1961 Tledano accused Turkey of carrying out massacres during the First World War." An Israeli Foreign Ministry official, who went to Ankara to find out what was happening over the appointment, reported back that "Turkish opposition is adamant".

Bizarrely, Professor Toledano had appeared on an Israeli army radio programme on the Armenian genocide in 1981, but to defend the Turkish position. He was called in at the last minute because the Turkish embassy in Tel Aviv refused to send a representative. He says he gave the Turkish version of what happened in 1915 without offering his own opinion.

Professor Toledano has given a series of interviews to the Turkish press, seeking to per-

In the next few weeks, Israel is expected to withdraw the name of Professor Ehud Toledano as its nominee to be Israel's next ambassador to Turkey. The Turkish government will not accept him because 15 years ago he appeared on an Israeli army radio programme about the Armenian genocide of 1915.

The Turkish government's position is that, contrary to the evidence of survivors, diplomats and missionaries present at the time, there was no genocide. It categorically denies one million Armenians died in massacres or on forced marches organised by the Turkish authorities of the day. The very fact that Professor Toledano, specialist in Turkish studies, appeared on a programme entitled *The Armenian Genocide* is enough to disbar him from representing Israel in Ankara.



**Turkish soldiers posing with a pile of five
slaughtered Armenians' heads**

If Turks deny the genocide ever happened, for Armenians it is at the centre of their historic memory, the great slaughter in which one-third of all Armenians in the world were wiped out. Israel has a more ambivalent position. Israel has a political and military alliance with Turkey which the government does not want to endanger by drawing parallels between the Jewish Holocaust and the genocide of the Armenians.

For Dr Yair Auran, a specialist in the Armenian genocide, this is unacceptable. He says that by meekly looking for another nominee to replace Professor Toledoano, Israel is transforming the genocide "into an open issue subject to negotiation". He compares, hypothetically, what has happened over the Toledoano appointment to a European state which had appointed an ambassador to Germany and the Germans rejected it "claiming that 30 years ago he mentioned on the radio that Nazi Germany carried out a holocaust of the Jews".

Israel does have a lot at stake. In recent years, its alliance with Turkey, which has a common border with Iran, Iraq and Syria, all Israel's enemies, has become very close. This week General Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, the Israeli chief of staff, paid an official visit to Turkey to persuade the army to buy Israeli Merkava 111 tanks. It also wants Turkey to adopt the Galil as its main assault rifle. Joint Israel-Turkey-US naval manoeuvres are scheduled for January. Ankara is now the third most important capital for Israel's diplomacy, com-

suede them of his pro-Turkish views. He says he "never expressed a pro-Armenian position in international conferences", adding that he is primarily an expert on the Ottoman empire from 16th to the 19th centuries. "I never researched or investigated the period of the First World War," he said. "I never questioned the Turkish version of events."

Professor Toledano is reported to believe that his academic colleagues at Tel Aviv university helped to sabotage his candidacy by suggesting to the Turks that he holds pro-Armenian views.

The Foreign Ministry may also be able to see a silver lining in the affair, in that the new Israeli ambassador is now likely to be a professional diplomat and not an academic friendly with David Levy.

But the overall issue is more important than diplomatic or academic intrigue. Yair Auron, a professor at the Kibbutzim college in Tel Aviv, says that a survey he conducted of 800 students at eight Israeli universities and colleges showed that "most of them said they knew nothing about the genocide of the Armenians or gypsies". Israel's Education Ministry is resisting pressure to treat the genocide more fully in the schools' curriculum.

Dr Auran says: "I accept the uniqueness of the Holocaust, but what happened to the Armenians was not a tragedy or a massacre but genocide. The Turkish government does not accept this. Not to admit there was a genocide is parallel to not admitting there was a Holocaust. Morally they are the same."

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America on security alert as Marines sell weapons

Since the end of the Cold War, US officials have warned of the dangers of rogue weapons sales by desperate members of the former Soviet armed forces. Mary Dejevsky says the arrest of six US marines in North Carolina this week shows that the problem is not unique to the defunct armies of the Eastern Bloc.

It was an elaborate sting operation conceived by the FBI over a period of 18 months and mounted in just 48 hours this week.

Four marines were arrested at their base, Camp Lejeune, in North Carolina on Thursday; a fifth was arrested nearby and

the sixth at a camp near Boston where he had recently been transferred. Seven civilians were also arrested in North Carolina and an eighth is being sought.

Among the weapons the FBI said it had seized were rifles, rocket launchers and anti-personnel mines, along with quantities of explosives.

Precise numbers were not disclosed but the charges give some idea of the seriousness of the crimes. The 13 people arrested have been accused not only with violations of the federal firearms laws, but also with the illegal manufacture and distribution of machine-guns, rifles and plastic explosives. Crates of ammunition were said to have been recovered from the house of one of the marines.

The FBI agent in charge of field operations in North Carolina, William Perry, said the

operation, codenamed Longfuse, had centred on the "theft and subsequent distribution of government, especially military, property and ordnance throughout the south-eastern United States". Two of the civilians arrested were described as weapons dealers.

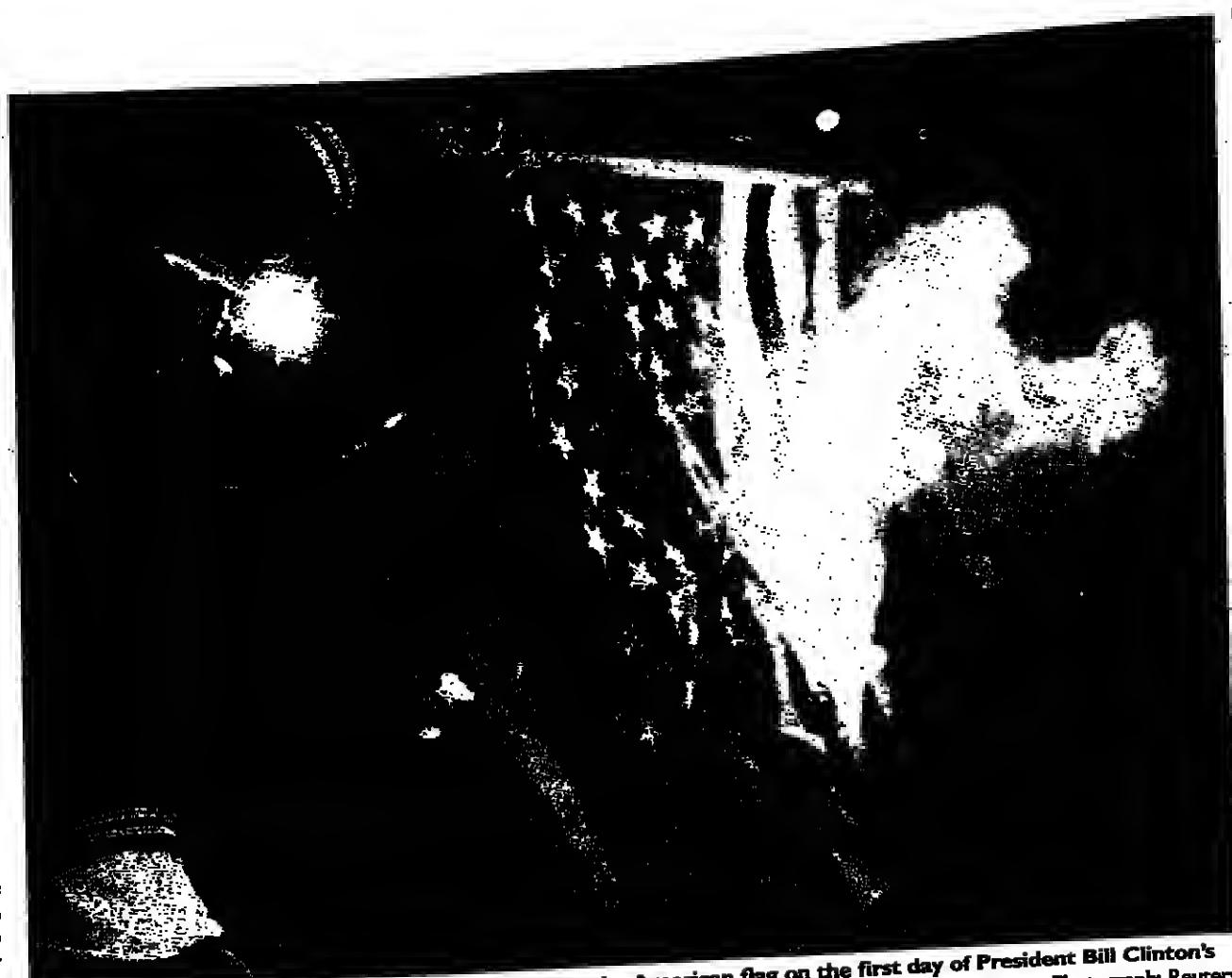
Two aspects of the case will be especially worrying to the authorities. The marines are the elite corps of the US armed forces, a source of great national pride and the last place where anyone would look for a clandestine arms-selling operation. Second, as the FBI revealed yesterday, the probable destinations of at least some of the weapons were unofficial right-wing militia groups, such as the one which was involved in the siege at Waco in Texas three years ago.

These groups tend to be small, disparate and based for the most part in remote rural ar-

reas. As the siege at Waco showed, however, they have considerable arsenals at their disposal. Officials said that there was no evidence to suggest that the weapons in this week's case had been stolen for anything other than financial gain.

Reflecting the gravity of the theft, William Cohen, the Defense Secretary, yesterday ordered a nationwide security alert at military bases and arsenals across the US.

His response suggested that a radical reassessment of the danger had taken place since the previous day. Then he had defended the existing state of security, saying "very strong security measures" were already in place to prevent the theft of military weapons and explosives, and that he would wait to learn details of the current case before deciding whether security needed to be increased.



Flames of anger: Left-wingers in Buenos Aires burning the American flag on the first day of President Bill Clinton's visit to Argentina. Police used tear gas after demonstrators also burned banks. Photograph: Reuters

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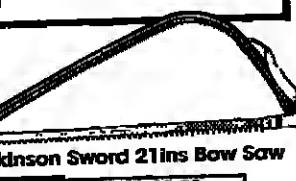
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Tests of 'superior' Aids vaccine open

American researchers said yesterday they were starting tests of a new vaccine against the Aids virus in people and said this one was far superior to earlier failed efforts.

Julia Hurwitz and Karen Slobod of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee, said the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) had given them the go-ahead to start safety trials in human volunteers. They said their vaccine, which uses part of the protein coating of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), was meant to protect healthy people against infection and not to help those already infected.

"The whole point of the vaccine is to alert the immune system against a pathogen that may appear in the future," Hurwitz said. "If we can wake them up by showing them the shape of a foreign agent before it comes along, then they can block that agent."

They said they would be recruiting between nine and 18 healthy volunteers for the Phase I clinical trial, which focuses on safety alone and not on whether the vaccine works.

The St Jude vaccine uses outer protein layers known as envelopes from 23 different mutations of HIV, each contained in a smallpox vaccine.

"Our concern is that HIV is a master of disguises. One HIV may have an envelope that looks like a circle. Another may have one that looks like a square, another like a triangle and so on," Ms Hurwitz said.

Che buried at scene of his best battle

Thirty years and eight days after his death, Ernesto "Che" Guevara was buried yesterday on the island where he made his revolutionary name. The remains of "Che," an Argentinean doctor whose life was changed by a chance 1955 meeting with Fidel Castro in Mexico City, were finally laid to rest in a mausoleum in the central Cuban city of Santa Clara, site of his best-known battle.

His remains had lain in the Bolivian jungle since he was executed by Bolivian troops on 9 October 1967. He had gone there in the hope of spreading Marxist revolution throughout South America. The location of his body remained a mystery until two years ago when a retired Bolivian officer revealed the area to an American journalist.

Hundreds of thousands of Cubans filed past his casket in Havana for three days last week, before it was moved to Santa Clara. It was there Guevara's revolutionary unit defeated Fulgencio Batista's troops in the last few days of 1958, forcing the dictator to flee the country on New Year's day 1959.

Guevara, who was 39 when he died, has several children and grandchildren living in Cuba. His widow, Aleida March, was among the mourners. Even as he was being buried, Cuba and the US continued their war of words. A US State Department spokesman accused Cuba of playing "the same old movies", while the *Washington Post* said the revolutionary was "not a mythical Marxist Robin Hood but someone who did much damage."

— Phil Davison

Yemen kidnappers demand jobs as ransom

Yemeni tribesmen holding a British man hostage are demanding more jobs and utility projects from the government in exchange for his release, an official source said yesterday.

"The kidnappers' demands are water and electricity projects in their area in addition to

more jobs for their sons in the armed and security forces," the source said. "This is nothing but blackmail of the government."

The British man, who worked for a Japanese development agency, was kidnapped on Wednesday by tribesmen

near Ans, about 60 miles south of the capital Sanaa.

On Thursday, four French tourists were released unharmed after being abducted the previous day by tribesmen in a separate incident in the north of the country, Yemeni officials said.

North Koreans seize farmers

North Korean border guards abducted two South Korean farmers yesterday inside the demilitarized zone that separates the two Koreas, the United Nations Command said.

The command said 12 armed North Korean soldiers crossed into the southern half of the huffer zone, seized the two in a rice field and took them back to the northern side. It called the abduction an apparent armistice violation.

"The South Korean government strongly demands that the North return the South Korean citizens immediately and safely," Defence Ministry spokesman Kang June-kwon said.

The incident took place in what is known as the joint security area near the border village of Panmunjom. The area is under the control of the UN command.

The command said a battalion of primarily US troops had been put on alert in the area and a senior member of the UN Military Armistice Commission was trying to contact North Korean officials.

The command said there had been no exchange of fire.

Congo's victorious rebels go on looting spree

The rebels victorious in Congo's civil war went on a looting spree in the capital Brazzaville and authorities clamped a night curfew on the oil port of Pointe Noire.

Former Marxist ruler Denis Sassou Nguesso has proclaimed victory in his militia's bloody four-month power struggle with forces backing President Pascal Lissouba. The UN Security Council on Thursday told foreign forces to get out of the country in a statement aimed at Angolan troops fighting alongside Sassou's.

Indonesia's smog returns

Choking smog caused by forest fires in Indonesia returned to several cities in the country, and one Sumatran town reported zero visibility. Government officials said visibility in several cities on Sumatra island and Kalimantan, the Indonesian side of Borneo island, was between 100 metres and 500 metres and more fires were reported on the two islands.

People in Padang, west Sumatra, said the city was "dark" because of the fires. Parts of the capital Jakarta were shrouded by thick haze on Friday, but the official said this was the result of pollutants rather than smoke from the forest fires.

Japan's boy killer sentenced

The family court convicted a 15-year-old boy of beheading a younger boy and sentenced him indefinitely to a juvenile prison where he will be treated for mental illness.

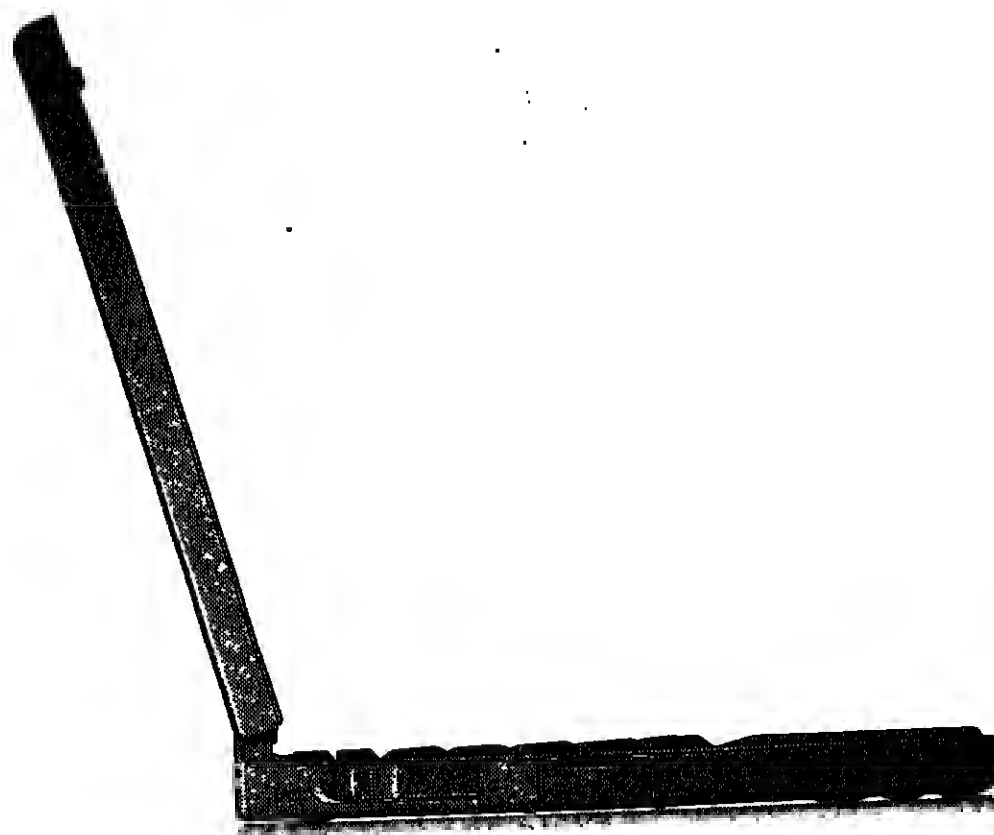
The boy, whose name has been withheld under Japan's juvenile law, also was convicted of other assaults on four younger girls, one of whom died. The murder and decapitation of 11-year-old Jun Hase has shocked Japan, where violent crimes are still relatively rare.

Hase's mutilated head was found outside the front gate of a school on 27 May with a note stuffed in its mouth calling police "fools."

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Supermac: Tory lord of misrule

A brace of new plays has brought two of the Tory Party's finest hours to the West End stage

In *A Letter of Resignation*, there's a tremendous insistence on the general splendour of John Profumo and his family. Fine, fine man; lovely, lovely wife; great, great shame. All perfectly true, but it can't help sounding as if Hugh Whitmore's play is trying to save its own slightly uneasy conscience about dragging up the Profumo affair yet again.

The Profumos have been through scandal, they've been through the movie *Scandal*, and they've been the subject of innumerable post mortems conducted by people who will be some way behind them in the queue at the pearly gates.

No, I am not suggesting that it isn't

BY PAUL
TAYLOR

perfectly legitimate to write a play like *A Letter of Resignation*, but I do think it a bit rich of Whitmore (scriptwriter of C4's current adaptation of Anthony Powell's *A Dance to the Music of Time*) to have said in this newspaper that he hoped John Profumo would come to see it and soak up "the sympathy and understanding" with which he's treated.

This is doubly disingenuous. For it's only by raking up the marital misery of Harold Macmillan, long-term cuckold of the Kray-fancying Bob Boothby, that Whitmore manages to put in a word for Profumo, the disgraced Minister of War in Macmillan's 1963 Conservative government. The idea is that Macmillan could have helped Profumo by confronting him directly but couldn't face this because of the personal bad memories the affair triggered.

I think it most unlikely, however, that 35 years from now the West End will be playing host to a drama about, say, the Tory Party and the arms-to-Iraq scandal. Why? Because, unlike this, that story does not have the twin pillars: class and sex, nobles and their knolls. So *A Letter* isn't perhaps quite as principled as it imagines.



Edward Fox as Macmillan: a star turn as a bemused but gruffly gracious Edwardian grandee

Gerrard Lewis

The play shows us Macmillan being informed of Profumo's resignation by an M15 emissary while on a shooting holiday up in Scotland. Not trusting the audience to know much of the background, it starts off with such a

thorough briefing session you feel that at any moment someone will remind the PM exactly which party he's leading. All pained honour and quavering like some weakened walrus, Edward Fox does a moving turn as Macmillan

doing his moving turn as the gruffly gracious Edwardian grandee passing, with a kind of wise bemusement, through the second major upheaval of English values in his lifetime.

Whitmore throws in a lot of anecdote

dotage (people who like stories about Diana Cooper and "Slipper" Urquhart *et al* will be in seventh heaven), some speculation about M15 being caught with its knickers down over the Russian spy Ivanov, and a painful memory-flashback to the day when Macmillan's wife Dorothy (played with a bouncy aristocratic brusqueness by Clare Higgins) told him she was pregnant by Boothby. In many of the best plays about politics, you're made to feel that a private flaw has sealed the public's fate. But here, despite some dark references to Macmillan's dominating mother and to his bouts of depression, you don't really sense that events were necessitated by something at the core of Macmillan's nature. Hence the play is elegant without being truly tragic. And, as was the case with Stephen Churchett's recent play about Clement Attlee and Tom Driberg, people are simplified in order to stand for principles.

The last honourable resignation from a Tory cabinet was perhaps that of Lord Carrington over the Falklands. That conflict is the setting for *Faith*, Meredith Oakes's new play at the Royal Court. It kicks off from a great idea. Imagine that you'd decided to get away from it all by decamping to a remote desert island; then, lo and behold, a *Blue Peter* team descend on the place to film some eco-friendly holiday footage. If you think that scenario is bad, put yourself in the skin-tight jeans of Sandra (Elizabeth Chadwick): a jumped-up racist little madam from Brixton, where she hated the "war" and the "wogs", she and her family think they have found peace in Falklands exile. Try telling that to the Argies. Let alone the British Army.

It's an intriguing perspective but Oakes fails to follow it through. When the Brits capture an American mercenary, the play lapses into an inert and unprovocative edition of *The Moral Maze* on the ethics of what is worth fighting for and whose orders one should obey. At the centre, there's an unravelling, conscience-stricken Sergeant (Howard Ward), who seems more like the kind of chap you'd run into on a weekend creative writing course than on a battlefield. You sit through most of John Burgess's unimpressive staging with a sigh of resignation.

Letter of Resignation: Comedy Theatre, Finsbury St, London SW1 (0171-369 1731). *Faith*: Royal Court (Ambassadors), West St, WC2 (0171-565 5000)

Truly temperamental

DANCE

Balanchine Mixed Bill
Birmingham Royal Ballet, Birmingham Hippodrome

In their pursuit of that protected species known as the Ballet Audience, many directors have headed for the safe cover of well-loved tales. Not David Bintley.

Last week he opened Birmingham Royal Ballet's autumn season at the Hippodrome with the everyday tale of a homosexual king and his x-rated death. On Thursday his company staged revivals of three one-act works by George Balanchine with the help of Karin von Aroldingen, Nils Martins and Victoria Simon of the family-treat Neither programme is easy to sell to the family-treat contingent but both should appeal to any theatre-goer in search of interesting new work or who would like to catch up on timeless classics of 20th-century dance.

Serenade was Balanchine's first American work and was developed from the class in stage technique he gave to his first students at the School of American Ballet in 1934. Each section was devised with whatever number of dancers turned up to the class and the choreographer deliberately retained something of that fresh, improvisatory feeling in the finished ballet. Birmingham have had the work in their repertoire since 1994 and they now look quite at home in it. The corps de ballet form the serrated ranks of the opening andante with the natural geometry of a carbon molecule.

Among the soloists in *Serenade* was the splendid Joseph Cipolla, who also danced the lead in *Orpheus*. This 1948 work was conceived as a companion piece for Balanchine's earlier *Apollo* and is a triumph of artistic collaboration that unites the specially-commissioned Stravinsky score with the weird and wonderful designs of sculptor Isamu Noguchi (who had worked successfully with Marika Graham since 1935). Noguchi's worm-infested unities for the Furies sprout fat ropes of fabric that erupt from the dancers' bodies and flick around them, tracing extra arcs of movement. Swayed by Orpheus's lament, the Furies huddle at the back of the stage and flutter unconvincingly like a giant anemone. Cipolla's angst-wracked body keens with the Stravinsky score as he mourns his dead wife. The music coaxed from him by Andrew Murphy's Dark Angel. Murphy was recruited from Australian Ballet last year and, although his Steve McGarrett quiff and long sideburns are a bit Alvin Stardust for the ballet stage, he's proving a very useful addition to the side. His Piers Gaveston last week was hugely admired and on Thursday he looked well in both *Orpheus* and in the "Phlegmatic" variation in *The Four Temperaments*.

The latter formed the evening's finale. Created in 1946, the ballet uses a score that Balanchine commissioned from Paul Hindemith with 500 of the dollars he had earned in Hollywood. The architectural divisions of space and the almost modular simplicity of the steps, which are taken apart and reassembled in endless permutations, make the work a choreographic landmark. David Justin's Melancholy is particularly successful in conveying the quality of inert weight that characterises this variation. He allows gravity to drag his shoulders forward to the earth or to pull his spine back into a tight arch before he lunges forward like a runner hreasting a tape. David Bintley may not be running with the pack but if he continues his brave and exciting programming policy he deserves to win in the long run.

Birmingham Hippodrome today (mat & eve), booking: 0121-622 7488; then touring to Sunderland, Bradford and Bristol

Louise Levent

THE WEEK IN REVIEW DAVID BENEDICT

THE FILM Oscar

Stephen Fry stars as the world's most famous aesthete and homosexual in Brian Gilbert's film with a screenplay by Julian Mitchell from Richard Ellman's definitive biography. With Jude Law as Bosie.

Cert 15. 116 mins, on general release.

Adam Mars-Jones noted that "*Wilde* would be nothing without Stephen Fry... hand-somely mounted but timidly filmed". "A star turn for everyone but the star... trots through the usual staging posts," allowed the FT. "This *Wilde* is about as dangerous a social subversive as Pam Ayres," barked the Mail. "Achieves what is, in the circumstances, the most paradoxical of states: respectability," worried *The Guardian*. "Far from a bad film, but it is certainly a missed opportunity," sighed *The Times*. "Law as Bosie is perfect... This fine film," endorsed the Telegraph. "I lubbed more or less continually through the first half," admitted the *New Statesman*. "Every scene is permeated with an intelligent insight into sex and society... For once a worthwhile use of Lottery cash," pontificated the *Standard*.

Best Supporting Actor awards all round in a safe, unadventurous film.

THE PREMIERE Standing Stone

Paul McCartney's classical odyssey continues with a 75-minute symphonic poem to his own text of primal chaos and redemption based on Celtic roots. Lawrence Foster conducted the LSO and chorus.

Studio recording on EMI.

Roh Cowan found the best "simple, direct and selectively orchestrated, but most of the bigger guys misfire". "Pretty thin stuff. But then something rather lovely happens: melody... given the chance to score major films, McCartney might not get Oscars," observed the Telegraph. "Ranges from the crudely Celtic to the Radio 2 Lloyd Webberish and is often embarrassingly slow-moving and empty of interest. 200 voices in the LSO Chorus sing 'Aaaaah' for two-and-a-half movements," snorted the *Standard*. "The musical equivalent of a veggie burger," scoffed *The Times*. "Clearly superior to many of the symphonic works by well-established figures in the 'classical', or as McCartney rightly prefers to say, 'serious' repertoire, for instance several of Shostakovich's works," trumpeted the Mail.

Thanks to Richard Rodney Bennett, John Harle, et al for structure, orchestration...

THE BALLET Edward II

Birmingham Royal Ballet dance David Bintley's ballet based on Marlowe's play. Wolfgang Stolwitzer is Edward, Andrew Murphy is Gaveston, music is by John McCabe. Costumes by Conran and lighting by Peter Mumford. On tour. Call 0121-622 2555 for details.

Louise Levent thrilled to "testosterone-rich ensembles worthy of the Bolshoi... a strong tale, told with conviction, danced with passion and staged with the greatest possible style". "Bintley resists the temptation to get too graphic in so bloody a story, although when he does use blunt statement - the red-hot poker, for instance - the effect is arresting. He also sets up a resonant contrast between the tenderness of Edward's love for Gaveston and the brutality of the other relationships," applauded *The Times*. "He has an unerring sense of theatre... horrid but gripping, and grippingly well done," approved the FT. "Bold Bintley is vindicated. *Edward II* is a triumph, a ballet drama of sweeping and chilling scale that showers credit on everyone involved... I can't wait to see it again," sang the Telegraph.

Not suitable for children but a must for everyone else.

THE WEEK ON RADIO ROBERT HANKS

A perfect but slender talent for the petty

There was a baffling sentence in one newspaper profile of Chris Evans last week - something about how people who call him a genius wonder why he doesn't do something more "substantial". Is anybody, you wonder, really that stupid - not stupid enough to call Evans a genius (how else do you describe his wit and unerring populism?), but stupid enough to think that he's remotely capable of anything substantial? Evans's talent, slender but perfect, is for the petty and the pointless. For him to attempt to apply it to something "substantial" would be about as sensible as a master of the three-minute pop melody trying to write an hour-long symphonic poem.

Evans is, above all, a big kid, and what delights us is the childish pleasure he takes in his own importance. It's that streak of childishness which makes it hard to be outraged by his excesses. If Jim Davidson, say, asked a woman colleague to fax him a photo of her breasts, it would be revoltingly sexist; with Evans, you merely feel as you would with a 14-year-old: it's very naughty but - well, boys will be boys.

Children are not always attractive, of course, especially when they have been spoilt. Earlier this week, Evans turned over large chunks of his new breakfast show on Virgin to griping at Matthew Bannister and

Radio 1, and it wasn't pretty - the term isn't part of conventional critical vocabulary, I know, but the appropriate response to this bratish exhibition is surely "Diddums".

The critical vocabulary proves even less useful when one tries to pin down something like Evans's "Dr Bongo" feature. In which listeners - mostly women - call in to be cheered up, and are subjected to a stream of mild suggestiveness ("I can make you happy, baby") in a cod Caribbean accent: this is followed by a short burst of bongo-playing. There's no doubt that the joke exploits some unpleasant prejudices, but I don't think it panders to them: the humour lies in the listener's embarrassment, and in Evans's evident satisfaction in creating it.

On this week's showing, Evans needs to work on the smugness and the distressing tendency to take himself too seriously. But if you're asking, "Is he still a genius?" the answer is "Oh, yes, I think so."

Over on the much-maligned Radio 1, Kevin Greening and Zoe Ball are rather less characterful, less compelling, but also less solipsistic, less off-putting. So far, Ball is the dominant partner - Greening, who's always had a shy, even monkish side, seems to withdraw in the face of her assertive "bubbiness". A little more of his irony would be nice, but the blend is still

surprisingly effective, and better attuned to a traditional Radio 1 breakfast audience than Mark and Lard were.

Mark and Lard, meanwhile, have shifted over to the afternoons, occupying the space vacated by Nicky Campbell. He in turn has taken over *The Magazine* on Radio 5 Live (Monday to Friday), where he has been displaying a mixture of sententiousness, plodding demagoguery and sycophancy. Things reached their nadir yesterday morning with a phone-in on the subject of banning paedophiles from parks and public places. Campbell's strategy, it's clear, is to act as the people's tribune - in other words, to figure out the most popular point of view and stick to it. The effect is to confine debate to the most primitive tabloid responses. At one point yesterday Campbell rounded on the lone libertarian he had in the studio and demanded: "Do you have children?" No, she admitted. Uh-huh, said Nicky and passed on: evidently convinced he'd scored a significant point.

There was no serious discussion of civil liberties, or of the impracticality of enforcing any exclusion laws; and calls demanding public torture of paedophiles were treated as serious contributions to the debate. Campbell is out of his depth; and, frankly, I wouldn't toss him a lifebelt.

"COMPELLING...STEPHEN FRY AS FLAMBOYANT OSCAR WILDE IS IMPRESSIVE AND MOVING"

"A REVELATION
...Stephen Fry gives a dominating screen performance in this impressive and touching work of intelligence, compassion and tragic satire."
Alexander Walker - EVENING STANDARD

"A WINNER FROM THE START
...brilliant acting by the entire cast, especially Stephen Fry who was born to be Wilde and Jennifer Ehle who breaks hearts as Oscar's wife, Constance."
Miranda Levy - WOMAN'S JOURNAL

STEPHEN FRY JUDÉ LAW VANESSA REDGRAVE JENNIFER EHLE

"FABULOUS
...a passionate and exciting film that cannot possibly fail to move you...Thrilling, enthralling and intelligent."
Dan Eider - TOTAL FILM

WILDE 15

STARTS TOMORROW

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GREENWICH CINEMA 01622 919620

Where's the shame in a bathtime cuddle?

A judge is shocked when he hears that a mother's boyfriend has been seen naked by her children, and awards custody to the father. Another judge overturns his decision. So who was more in tune with modern parenting? Angela Neustatter believes that we do better to help children to love their bodies.

Was Lady Justice Butler-Sloss right when earlier this week she returned the nine-year-old son and six-year-old daughter to a mother who had allowed her fiancé to walk around the house naked and to bath with her children? Or had the "shocked" Judge James Wignmore, who she over-ruled, only been doing what we expect of him in these troubled times and protecting the children from a potentially risky situation when he gave custody to the father, in June, after hearing of the fiancé's behaviour (even though he said very clearly that there was no suggestion of abuse)?

These are difficult questions at a time when, day after day, we hear yet another chilling story of paedophilia and child abuse. And when research done by Kidscape, the child protection agency, based on interviews with 91 paedophiles shows us that a very high percentage, and this includes natural parents as well as outsiders, will build up trusting and loving relationships and propitious opportunities in order to abuse.

But it is important that we stop and think about whether nakedness and the cosy intimacy of sharing a bath with children in a family situation is necessarily the sign of a depraved family. Certainly if it

were my brother and I who, when children, had been the subject of a custody hearing, we would have been whisked into care - for our paediatric father regularly wandered from bedroom to bathroom without clothing. He did it absently, or because he couldn't be bothered to put anything on for so short a journey, rather than in any spirit of display. And now my partner and I have likewise been unworried by our sons seeing us *au naturel*, if they come into our bedroom or bathroom. I'm sure there is a Polaroid photo lurking somewhere of them in the bath with their father.

I know that in both these instances, as in the households of many of my friends, that the nakedness, the sharing of unclad body contact in games, cuddles and showers, has been just one dimension of an easy intimacy that extends into all areas of life. It has also been an important way of helping children to feel at ease with their bodies. These days, we do not have to be, as Bernard Shaw has moaned: "Ashamed of everything that is real about us... ashamed of our naked skins."

This is not a small consideration, as Peter Wilson, director of the Young Minds children's mental health charity agrees, in a country such as Britain where we have a frankly perverse attitude to nakedness. We seem to have no problem with Page Three girls and rather more lurid representations of men and women clad in what Marshall McLuhan called "sexual flags" (clothes that make the genitals conspicuous and often eroticised, while purporting to disguise them). Nor are we unduly bothered by the kind of sensual nudity or semi-nakedness that gets on to our television and cinema screens with little trouble. Yet we whisk a streaker at Wimbledon into custody quick as a flash. And we all remember the almighty hoo-

hah when photos of news reader Julia Somerville's children, photographed in the bath by her fiancé, were discovered. Of course, there are exhibitionists who reveal themselves to children because they get a kick out of doing so; and they frighten children in a way that cannot be tolerated. And equally there are people who photograph children in seemingly innocent domestic situations and then stoke paedophile fantasies with the resulting pictures. But as Gaby Sheaton at Kidscape says, it is important that we find a way to protect children and enable them to resist paedophile advances without wrecking healthy innocence, fun and intimacy within families. She points out, too, that there is a great difference between a parent or step-parent who goes out of their way to display their nakedness before children and persons like my father, for whom nakedness is simply not a problem.

What Peter Wilson calls the "new puritanism" was already well entrenched in the days of my father's naked cavortings. My dad used to tell of a psychiatric colleague who, knowing nothing of our domestic situation, once observed to my father that he was treating a family where the father was clearly mentally unstable, because "he goes round the house in the nude". This is a puritanism that stems from the wretched feeling that we can trust no-one and nothing. If we allow our children to think that a member of the family who is allowed to appear naked



Au naturel: François Boucher's 'Venus and Cupid', 1754, in the Wallace Collection, London

Photograph: Bridgeman Art Library

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Courage, martyrdom, sanctity, youth – and renunciation of a profligate past

Nineteenth-century Europeans loved a sentimentalist, and Thérèse of Lisieux, dying of tuberculosis in a nunnery at 24 after having written a popular autobiography, suited the times. But why is the Catholic church preparing new honours for her, asks Richard North, who argues that candidates for public canonisation, from Che Guevara to Bob Marley, have much in common.

On 30 September 1897, an obscure young nun died. Thérèse Martin was a Carmelite, living in her strictly enclosed order in Lisieux, a provincial city in northern France. She was 24 and had succumbed to tuberculosis. That might have been that - a frequent occurrence among people of that time, a family sadness, but only a small blow to a community devoted in any case to preparing people for the afterlife. But Thérèse was something else. She had always intended to be a saint. Her image was soon in a thousand breast pockets in the trenches. It sustained weary missionaries all over the tropics. In 1925 she was canonised. A hundred years on, she will be made a Doctor of the Church tomorrow, in St Peter's. Henceforth, her *dicta* are to be considered of a quality with those of St Thomas Aquinas and the other builders of Catholic doctrine.

How come? Thérèse became famous for a rather sickly faith: she called herself a "little flower of Jesus", and thought of herself as a plaything of Christ in addition to the normal nun's thought that she was a bride of Christ. Like an anorexic, she sometimes seems someone resisting adulthood. Her self-abnegation at times seems - probably wrongly - like an insult to the aspirations of the rest of her gender. Still, if she was sentimental, it was a sentimental age. If we struggle to see her merit, her generation might have struggled to see that of the late Princess of Wales, who has become so admired in death.

We cannot afford to be too superior. A hundred years later our appetite for such dead heroes does not diminish with the waning of conventional faith. And while we are perhaps more cynical than our forebears, we seem to be at least as - perhaps more - credulous. The young like a romantic hero, perhaps to keep alive the belief that however humdrum their own lives, there remain people who combine talent and drama. The old, no less than previous generations, are in need of gaining consolation from the idea that there are people who personify goodness.

So "the people" will go on making - or rather, proposing - saints. Mother Teresa of Calcutta may have been an erratic administrator, as is rumoured, but unless something much worse turns up about her, she is likely to remain admired. Hindus in Calcutta are already venerating her (along with Princess Diana) and in time the Church will presumably decide whether she can be endorsed as truly holy.

The non-religious also make saints. Though they have fewer rules to go by and sexual morality and personal denial are much less of an issue, the same types emerge. Che Guevara died thirty years ago, and for twenty years he was a vivid icon of revolutionary and military fervour. The comparison is necessarily imperfect, but for those students who put up the poster with his beret and head, Che was a sort of Joan of Arc, the 15th century French freedom fighter and visionary who had to wait 500 years for canonisation. The image of Che on a T-shirt is, by the way, strikingly similar to medieval portrayals of Christ's face imprinted on the white cloth which Veronica passed to him for comfort on the way to Calvary, and which was imprinted with his countenance. Not, of course, that Christ advocated violent revolution.

Che was a guerilla, and executed by his captors: this makes him, like Joan, a candidate for the label of "martyr". He had often prefigured such an event. This isn't a prerequisite for sainthood, but it certainly helps. Paying the ultimate price for one's beliefs is particularly potent as an ideal in the romantic and moral hero. It is, after all, altruism taken as far as it can go, rather as a suicide pact is the ultimate test of lovers. Saints are above all extremists.

Martial heroes do not make obvious spiritual heroes, and yet their deaths - like Che's - can have elements of martyrdom about them. And they can be romantic, too. Nelson acquired something like sainthood even when he was alive, and his death provoked a violent upwelling of popular feeling. Stephen Daniels, the cultural critic, sees him as an important popular, as op-



posed to state, hero. He was a hero at arms, but like Joan of Arc manages to mean far more than, say, Churchill. He was Byron, a lover, a self-made man, a man driven to heroism out of an attractive weakness of spirit.

For a generation that has not known war, is not ideological but is not formally religious either, it is hardly surprising that Che's image on adolescent bedrooms has been replaced by that of Bob Marley. I fell under the reggae star's spell when I interviewed him, and happily propose that he was some sort of saint. His womanising and his laddishness might have counted against him, and he may have had more serious faults I know nothing of. Perhaps the kids like the spiff which is forever in his hand or lips. There is something more to it than that, though. His musical outpourings would bear comparison with St Francis' mystical but earthy Canticles, and were strikingly resonant with the Psalmody he must have

heard in Jamaica as a child. It was song-making of profound seriousness and great joy. That would be enough to make him worthy of attention. But there is something, too, in his apparent lack of self-regard. One guesses that charisma (which he personified) equals stardom in inverse proportion to vanity. I never believed that he took Rastafarianism all that seriously, except as a mild and decent myth and ritual which conferred dignity on a people in serious need of some. Still, he may also strike people as having a sort of devoutness about him. His songs of peace seem far less fatuous than poor John Lennon's.

Courage, martyrdom, sanctity, youth: no one of these things is necessary or sufficient to sainthood. But candidates need to exemplify two or three among them. And it helps, too, to have been flawed, profligate or reckless at some point. Where else lies proof of renunciation, or redemption? Leonard Cheshire, a war hero and man about town who became a devout charity worker, might make a candidate for sanctity. He used to argue that physical disability - his special care, but psychological disability must be the same - is a mark from God. It provides unique opportunities for insight in the victim and sympathy in the onlooker.

And how we fail the unfortunate, and then venerate them. Thus, Marilyn Monroe's death is iconic because it is supposed that men, bewitched by her beauty and untamed by self-discipline, played on her flawed nature and put it, finally, into a flat spin.

The public always likes its sympathies to be tinged with shock. Wilde, Hendrix, Morrison, Moon prove it. James Dean's death in a smashed Porsche matters because it was appropriate to our image of him that he burned out in the fast lane of life. St Francis of Assisi had been flashy: a follower of fashion to please a Versace. St Teresa of Avila remarked how violently she desired the things she wanted: like Freddie Mercury (whose death inspired ad-

miration out of proportion even to his success in life), she could say: "I want it all and I want it now".

Seen against these criteria, Thérèse was hardened with or achieved more than enough of the requirements of sainthood. She put her signature on a sort of spirituality. At 16, and as a nervous, spoiled brat, a creature of a comfortable bourgeois home, she had bullied the church authorities into allowing her to incurate herself for medication, she died a heroic and largely voluntary medieval death. But she was a determined youngster, set on sainthood. She had been prevailed upon to write an autobiography and it is not going too far to say that it was assiduously promoted by a formidable gang of her fellow religious.

But *The Story of a Soul*, as it was called in English, belies everything a cynic might say of it. One of her most recent biographers, Monica Furlong, points rightly to the steel and the good sense which it displays. Thérèse, on this reading, might have outgrown the sugariness into which the chauvinist culture of her day had indoctrinated her. She might, in short, have grown more like that grander figure, Teresa of Avila who herself was a hysteric in early years and achieved greatness only after her 40s.

And even as it stands, Thérèse's legacy is serious. A youngish nun told me in Lisieux this summer that Thérèse's devotion to the family, and her use of the human family as a simile for the heavenly family, is all the more poignant now that we have so damaged its structures. But a doctor of the church? For at least one senior Catholic lay figure, this seems a dumping down too far. But then, the Catholic church endures above all because along with its authority, it never eschews the vulgar, the simplistic and the dissident if it believes these things have caught the attention of enough people of goodwill. It has, after all, the image of Jesus - victim, virgin and visionary - to uphold.

Parlez-vous Aramaic? Welcome to the global Babel



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There may be a case for teaching dead languages to children as young as seven, if only on the First Principle of Management Consultancy, which is that any change to the working environment increases motivation. Studies have shown that it does not matter what you do to office workers – increase the lighting, lower the lighting, turn the air-conditioning up, turn it down – productivity goes up. If people feel they are the subject of an experiment or the centre of attention, they will perform better.

Those primary-school children who choose to learn Latin in their lunch-break are bound to do better in all other subjects, improve their concentration and – studies will no doubt show – be subject to lower levels of family breakdown in later life. The results, we can be absolutely sure, would be much the same if children opted to take classes in hieroglyphics, the languages of Middle Earth or the history and record of Manchester United Football Club.

Latin for under-11s, then, is a good idea. But it is not necessarily the best idea. No disrespect to the teachers of Belle Vue primary school, Stourbridge, who should be congratulated on their exciting project, but there are even better things that children could be doing.

However, the classical languages hold such a place in the British mythology of academic excellence that it is worth pausing to consider the peculiar (from *peculium*, private property, itself from *pecu*, cattle) claims of Latin.

There was a time when, in Europe, the ability to use Latin made someone cosmopolitan. Now, all over the world, it is the ability to use English, the closest we have to a universal language.

There was a time, more recently, when in Britain the ability to use Latin marked one out as a member of a learned community, a community that regarded itself as the extension of, and progression from, Greco-Roman civilisation. Its very usefulness in practical life emphasised its rarification, its intellectual discipline and its role as a form of communion with the past. Now, we see the classical inheritance in a more objective historical perspective, and we see education less as a project for a closed priesthood.

This leaves us a peculiar nation, embarrassed speakers of a casual, misspelt, irregular blend of old German, Norse, Celtic, French, and, of course, Latin – a language which through an extraordinary sequence of happenstances has become the lingua franca (lit. Frankish tongue) of the world. We giggle about our incompetence



in other people's languages and even wish earnestly we could speak them, while knowing that almost anyone we meet in the world will speak our language better than we can speak theirs.

But the joke is not funny any more. However dominant English becomes, and it is already the language of the Internet

and of the European single currency (in which, paradoxically, the UK will not initially take part), to carry on as humbling linguistic amateurs is both insular and lazy. Surely any attempt to modernise Britain requires a serious attempt to become an outward-looking, cosmopolitan nation, which must include fluency in live European languages?

The official approach is right as far as it goes: a modern language is part of the national curriculum for older children. But the overwhelming emphasis on French, which dates from 1914 (when the teaching of German was suddenly abandoned, for obvious reasons), is a terrible drag on the system. Compared to the disbenefits of compulsory French, voluntary Latin is a great boon.

But the answer, surely, is to expand the choices of modern European languages available to children. A particularly strong case can be made for Spanish. Recent research suggests that pupils make more rapid progress in Spanish than in other languages, and that knowledge of Spanish – like that of Latin – greatly enhances the capacity to read other European languages. Spanish is also, more than French, an international language.

Another strong case can be made for German, a logical language of tedious

grammatical regularity which ought to appeal to traditionalists who believe that learning Latin "trains the mind" and instils a strong grasp of grammar. Besides, German is, more than French, the second language of the European Union, especially along its expanding frontier in central and eastern Europe.

Equally, there are arguments for Russian, another highly systematic language with the added intellectual challenge of Cyrillic script for those for whom mere difficulty is a measure of worth. But it is time to let pupils and their parents choose which languages to learn, which is bound to mean French taking its rightful place lower down the rankings.

At least we have a Prime Minister who is both fluent in French and European in outlook who can lead such an adventure with the spirit and attack it needs. It may require some tinkering with the national curriculum – why should Latin or Greek (or Cornish, Aramaic or ancient Hebrew, for that matter) not be acceptable options within a languages strand biased in favour of modern European languages in general, rather than French in particular? But what we Anglophones must do above all is shake off our strange inferiority-superiority complex and plunge into the global Babel with gusto.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Green Belt housing

Sir: Although Nicholas Schoon is correct in saying that the Government is expecting local planning authorities to make provision for 4.4 million new households by 2016 ("Historic challenge to the nation's Green Belt", 16 October), he neglects to point out that this expansion will be heavily concentrated in the South-east.

The Government needs to consider just how realistic it is to continue to expect local planning authorities like Hertfordshire to cater for this level of growth within the confines of existing planning policy.

It is obviously important that adequate land for new housing is allocated, otherwise prices in some areas will rise dramatically, more young people will be forced to continue living with their parents longer and more people will find themselves homeless.

In the absence of a coherent national response to this problem, authorities like Hertfordshire are bound to make the best effort they can within the existing framework.

The Royal Town Planning Institute favours a "sequential test" for new housing. This, along with appropriate tax incentives, would force house-builders to give priority to brownfield sites within existing built-up areas.

Even with such a policy, the reality is that at least half of new housing will have to be on non-urban sites. A range of solutions, including town and village expansion and New Towns will be required. While Green Belts still have validity, in many areas their boundaries could be modified to provide useful development land, especially in places where there are good public transport links.

Society as a whole has to cope with the reality of more marriage breakdowns, people living longer and more young people wishing to live by themselves. Town planners and local planning authorities must be realistic in their allocation of sites and Green Belts can no longer be sacrosanct.

TREVOR ROBERTS
Senior Vice President
Royal Town Planning Institute
London W1

Sir: Your article (16 October) on new housing development and the future of the Green Belt was timely in drawing attention to the difficult planning decisions involved. We would like to emphasise four points about the situation in Hertfordshire you mention.

First, the Hertfordshire Structure Plan is in line with regional planning policy set by the previous government. The county council has to provide its allotted share of overall housing provision in the South-east – 65,000 more homes in the county during the period 1991 to 2011.

Second, the main development strategy in Hertfordshire is "planned regeneration" of towns – providing as many

more homes as possible within existing built-up areas. We would like to provide all 65,000 by regeneration but we do not believe this is feasible.

Third, our choice of west of Stevenage as the location for housing was a key issue at the public inquiry. The panel upheld the county council's reasons for choosing this location. West of Stevenage is in the Green Belt hut, crucially in its favour, it is also close to town centre facilities, job opportunities and excellent public transport links.

Fourth, only 3,600 new homes will be built west of Stevenage by 2011. How many more will be built here, and on Green Belt land elsewhere in Hertfordshire, will depend on central government, which is preparing new regional planning guidance.

Hertfordshire County Council is making it clear to the Government what the consequences for the Green Belt will be if its housing allocation is increased.

JOHN METCALF
Leader of Hertfordshire County Council
CHRIS WHITE
Deputy Leader of Hertfordshire County Council
Hertford

Parliamentary reform

Sir: Fran Abrams (report, 16 October) is too gloomy in her assessment of *House Magazine's* survey of new MPs and their likely attitudes towards reforming the House of Commons.

Reform, if it is going to happen, will be led from the top, not by the new recruits. The Government has shown remarkable zeal in setting about modernising Parliament. They set up the Select Committee on Modernisation which was appointed on 4 June and 49 days later produced, under the leadership of Ann Taylor, the Leader of the House, a unanimous report running to 102 paragraphs detailing a comprehensive programme of reform of the procedures of the House.

Perhaps the conformist tendencies shown among the new MPs are due to their previous involvement with the system: the *House Magazine* report also revealed that 20 per cent of them had worked in public policy jobs before entering Parliament. The newcomers will show their radical tendencies or not through their responses to what their established colleagues produce by way of reform, not by what they do themselves. So far the signs are promising.

DAVID TENCH
Amersham, Buckinghamshire

Sir: Your leading article ("The Lords do not need reform – they need abolition", 16 October) doesn't tell us what you want a second chamber to do. Is it to hold the Commons in check? Then of course an elected body would be just the job. But if all you want is intelligent



Green Belt land: town planners may be forced to build on non-urban sites in future

Photograph: Brian Harris

and knowledgeable scrutiny of legislation, then perhaps it isn't such a good idea to bestow on the second chamber the power that comes from being democratically elected.

TED GANG
London W3

Kangaroo meat

Sir: Neil Blewett, the Australian High Commissioner, is incorrect in his assertion that there has been a dramatic increase in the kangaroo population (Letters, 11 October). The Australian government's own figures from aerial surveys showed in 1996 the lowest population for 11 years, yet the highest commercial kill on record (5.2 million) occurred in that same year.

Mr Blewett maintains that the "cull" is carried out by professional shooters who are licensed and must comply with strict laws. However, a licensed kangaroo shooter receives only two days' instruction on hygiene, with no training whatsoever in marksmanship.

Nor can the processing of kangaroo meat be compared with the processing of meat in abattoirs, since the slaughtered kangaroos are gutted at the killing site without supervision. Furthermore, there are documented cases in Australia of parasite infections as a result of consumption of kangaroo meat. Doctors raised their concern at a recent medical conference in Tasmania after the discovery of

yet another health-threatening parasite in wallaby meat.

Finally, Mr Blewett failed to mention the additional, appalling cruelty involved in the kangaroo "cull" when over a million joeys (baby kangaroos) are brutally killed each year when their mothers are slaughtered for meat. This figure should be taken into account as part of the killing quota and as part of the grim reality of the kangaroo industry.

SALLY WILSON
Australia/Asia Coordinator
International Fund for Animal Welfare
Cromborough, East Sussex

Poetic licence

Sir: Adam Horowitz really is an angry young man. This, however, is not because of some purported spat with his father ("Son gives rhyme and reason", 15 October). It is because he has been misrepresented by Sam Taylor.

I went to the Murray Lachlan Young/Jessica D'Este event at the Cheltenham Literature Festival with some apprehension, given all that I have read and heard about him – especially from my father, Michael Horowitz, whose opinion I respect. I was pleasantly surprised by Young's performance.

I did not cheer throughout "Simply Everyone's Taking Cocaine", that would have been a crass response to a poem written to express the awfulness of

cocaine. Nor did I "whoop it up" at any point.

What I did do was approach Ms Taylor afterwards and, because I disagree with my father's stand, say: "Murray Lachlan Young has done almost as much for poetry in the last five months as my father has done in the last five years, in that he has given poets a cause to follow. Whatever you think of his verse."

In truth, Michael has done more for international poetry in the last 40 years than almost anyone else. No one in the "Establishment" has enquired so many good new voices to be heard.

ADAM HOROWITZ
Stroud, Gloucestershire

Wobbly moon

Sir: William Harston, attempting to explain some common misconceptions about the Sun, Earth and Moon (Weather, 10 October), perpetuates one of the oldest misunderstandings when he says, "the Moon... always keeping its dark side towards us".

The Moon does not have a dark side. It keeps the same side pointed towards the Earth. That side is either illuminated and hence fully visible at full moon, or completely unlit and therefore invisible at new moon. There are of course all the intermediate stages in between – the phases of the Moon.

Incidentally, because the Moon "wobbles" a little on its axis it is possible to observe some 55 per cent of its surface from Earth throughout the year.

BARRY LINTON
Goring, Oxfordshire

Great British hemp

Sir: The point that many commentators and the Labour Party seem to have missed in the debate on the legalisation of marijuana (report, 14 October; letter, 17 October) is the history of good old hemp and why it was made illegal in the first place.

Prohibition began in the 1920s thanks to William Randolph Hearst who wished to use the many acres of forests that he owned to produce paper from wood-pulp. He had stitched up a deal with Dupont who had patented a process to do so and the only thing left to do was to put marijuana (a new word invented for the purposes of demonising cannabis) growers out of business – hence the Marijuana Tax. Cotton growers were also happy to jump on the bandwagon.

It could be argued that hemp was responsible for puffing the "Great" into Britain. All rope, sails and paper required to sustain the British Empire were made from hemp. During the reigns of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I it was possible to be hanged for not producing one's tithe of hemp for the realm. What a turn around.

SJ GLAZZARD
Worcester

Raining on Renoir

Sir: The suggestion that the young woman in the foreground of Renoir's *Les Parapluies* is uncomfortable only because of the attentions of the man behind her (report, 16 October) seems to me to overlook the obvious cause of her discomfort: namely the lack of an umbrella.

ANNE HERTZELL
Guildford, Surrey

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The final stages of the week passed in a blur – partly because of a visit to Cheltenham, whose very fine literary festival *The Independent* has been sponsoring. Blur of train to blur of taxi, to blur of Cheltenham-by-night, and into theatre, where I met and introduced Sir Roy Strong, who did a reading from his diaries.

He was on fine form on Thursday night, dropping alternately kind and waspish descriptions of women he'd known in his public career, during which he virtually reinvented both the National Portrait Gallery and the V&A as popular institutions. Certainly, his diaries have hugely enjoyable pen-portraits. Margaret Thatcher, for instance, struck him in 1976 as being "an apotheosis of the boss's wife, with the appeal of cosmeticised putty", while Grey Gowrie, the former arts minister, is exactly caught: "a curious saturnine fellow with a dark complexion as though descended from Spaniards wrecked in the Armada".

They are strange, rather touching events, these theatrical readings. In the age of the CD-Rom and the multimedia experience, there we all were in a darkened theatre, following the loops and swings of description from a single voice. Prose readings are something one still vaguely associates with Charles Dickens; but there is still a thrill about the actual physical contact with the real voice, the author-in-the-flesh. As I blurred through late-night parties to bed, it seemed obscenely reassuring.

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SJ GLAZZARD
Worcester

QUOTE UNQUOTE

Only because Rembrandt didn't have his own TV show – **Rolf Harris**, entertainer, explaining why he was named the world's most famous artist by 38 per cent of people involved in a survey

The Booker Prize is about my past, not my future. I will only write another book if I have another book to write. I don't believe in professions – **Arundhati Roy**, winner of this year's Booker Prize

I always knew he wouldn't be faithful to me, but I did think he might try for the first couple of years – **Lady Fairbairn**, widow of former Tory MP Sir Nicholas Fairbairn. She discovered that he had a secret son conceived in the early days of their marriage.

If you can't get pissed on your own show, when can you get pissed? – **Chris Evans**, Virgin FM's new breakfast show host, who celebrated by drinking a can of beer before 8.10am on his first day

I can't go into politics, because if I do Tim has said that he'll divorce me – **Nicola Horlick**, ex-City hotshot, mother of five

In my day, I would only have sex with a man if I found him extremely attractive. These days, girls seem to choose them in much the same way as they might choose to suck on a boiled sweet – **Mary Wesley**, 84-year-old author

Even allowing for this squeamishness, however, the descriptions of the Merchant Affair suggest something very unusual.

I would only make one exception to this rule. On *Newsnight* on Tuesday or Wednesday the Tory MP, Gerald Howarth asked Jeremy Paxman and Bridget Rowe (*Sunday Mirror* editor) if they had never had affairs. Paxman - rightly - did not reply. Rowe - equally rightly - did reply. She is the exception. Tabloid editors should answer.

The mayor of London will have to keep the attention of nearly everyone within the M25

Photograph: Science Photo Library

to keep it down to a mt. please.

What was going on was in itself a kind of blind date, albeit a purely political one. We had persuaded four leading Londoners to imagine that they were running for Mayor; not difficult for Lord Archer and Ken Livingstone, both already well into their campaigns. At present oo-one quite knows what they're campaigning to be, as the shape of the majority will be decided by a referendum next May. We do know that it will be the biggest job in politics next to the PM and Chancellor; and that in its wake will follow directly-elected mayors for every major British city and large town.

departure for our democracy should engage the ordinary voter's enthusiasm. There is little doubt that Londoners like the idea of new leadership for the capital. An opinion poll commissioned by LWT, *The Evening Standard* and KPMG, showed that they will vote by almost four to one for a new city government. Interestingly, by a massive majority, they would like the first mayor to be independent of the political parties; a desire reflected in the runaway poll victory for Richard Branson. It takes only a moment's thought to work out that Branson won't give up his business interests to enter politics. When asked what he might do were he mayor, his high idea was to grass over many of London's streets. However, the vote is an indication that London will elect someone they don't think of principally as a politician, whatever his or her party label.

The real issue now is whether mayoral contests will give our moribund local politics a shot in the arm. So we put it

In many ways, this is a return to an earlier English tradition of politics – before radio and television, where those who

Mr Blair, who addressed one of these debates, was right to promise that he would be carrying on his live, unscribed, shirt-sleeved appearances. Face-to-face democracy still has an important role that the media cannot usurp; we want to see and hear our rulers and engage with them. This is not territory that should be left to the single issue pressure groups or protesters; pressing the flesh has come to have a rather limited, intimate meaning for our mainstream politicians. Instead of limiting themselves to one-to-one encounters, they need to rediscover their ability to excite us by the thousand.

Driving up the steep, spiralling road to Biot, I was encouraged at first. The old place did not seem to have changed beyond repair (although I didn't recall the multi-story car-

In the last quarter of a century, the Côte d'Azur has become a great, linear city from Cannes to Menton, indistinguishable in its shabbier stages from parts of Florida or California. There is even talk in Paris of recognising this *de facto* reality and creating a new urban, political entity for the Côte d'Azur: a kind of gallic Los Angeles. Taking off from Nice airport, you see that the suburbs of the coastal megalopolis of over

also in the visitors' book. Our employer promised that "Graham" would come to one of her parties. He never did. Instead we - long-haired and leftist as the times demanded - would mingle in grim delight with stiff-backed, retired admirals who insisted that Edward Heath was a Communist. Why? Because he had not abolished income tax yet.

Now the lawn had reverted to scrub; the hedges and roses were gone. A formidable security gate blocked the way. The farm next door, where the farmer's 17-year-old daughter

Bored with my tales of life at the villa, he began to chat up a good-looking village boy in French even more appalling than mine. He proudly announced, after a few minutes, that his new friend had agreed to walk with him to see the sea. I thought this mildly odd since the sea was two miles away. I said nothing and went home. Five minutes after I got back, so did he. His friend had taken him, he explained irritably, not to see *la mer* (the sea) but to see *la mairie* (the town hall). The rest is another country.

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CAF

James Michener

James Albert Michener, writer: born New York 3 October 1907; married 1935 Patti Koon (marriage dissolved 1948), 1948 Vange Nurd (married dissolved 1955), 1955 Mari Yoriko Sabusawa (died 1994); died Austin, Texas 17 October 1997.

The life of the novelist James Michener is an archetypal rags to riches story. A founding, raised largely in the poorhouse of Doylestown, Pennsylvania, he achieved, by dint of hard work and a lively intelligence, first, academic success in the field of education before the Second World War, then worldwide acclaim and incredible wealth in the decades after the war as the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of a string of epic novels.

He won the Pulitzer at the age of 40 for his first book of fiction, *Tales of the South Pacific* (1948), a collection of stories which became the basis for the musical *South Pacific*. Thereafter, however, critics, whilst not denying his talent for narrative, have tended to sneer at his heavily researched "blockbusters" for their shallow characterisations, stilted dialogue and lack of style.

But readers love them. His books, which include *Hawaii* (1959), *Caravans* (1963), *Centennial* (1974), *Chesapeake*

(1978), *Space* (1982), *Texas* (1985) and 25 or so others (fiction, non-fiction and memoir), have sold over 75 million copies in 52 languages and have formed the bases for nine major movies and half a dozen television films and mini-series.

Born in 1907, Michener never knew who his real parents were. He accepted that he never would and determinedly kept speculation out of his life. He was fostered by Mabel Michener who, when times were hard, was obliged to pack him off to the poorhouse for weeks at a time. He later attributed his lack of interest in material things to his poverty-stricken childhood.

"Very early on in life I decided the hell with it, material things weren't for me," he said. "Christmas would come and other kids would have all these presents and it wouldn't bother me a bit."

And indeed, relative to his incredible wealth, he seems to have lived a modest life, in certain instances a quickly frugal one. He never bought shaving cream, for example, using instead odd slivers of soap he carefully saved. However, this did not make him a mean man. Indeed, he gave most of his money away.

In 1996 he estimated he had given away more than \$100 million to libraries, museums and universities over the years. He bought modern art to give

to art galleries - settling for prints on his own walls - and donated his \$25 million Japanese print collection to Honolulu's city art gallery.

His largesse to universities was partly due to gratitude - he was educated at nine of them. Although as a restless, adventurous teenager he had, by the age of 20, ridden freight trains and hitchhiked through 45 of America's then 48 states, taking odd jobs at carnivals and travelling shows as he went, he also excelled in his studies at school and won a scholarship to a Quaker college in 1929.

Before the Second World War he was heavily involved in educational work, so much so that he was a visiting professor of education at Harvard for a time.

His wartime experiences visiting the Pacific Islands for the Navy - he started as a seaman third class and ended the war as a lieutenant commander - provided the material for *Tales of the South Pacific*. Thereafter, for the next four decades, he alternated works of non-fiction with his works of fiction set in exotic locations.

His non-fiction included several books about Japanese prints, a subject on which he was an expert, and an investigation of the Kent State killings (*Kent State*, 1971) which came down on the side of the rebellious students. (He was a supporter of Kennedy and stood unsuccessfully for Con-

gress on the Democratic ticket.)

Most of his epic fiction follows the same formula: focus on a specific geographical location and tell a story based there over decades, even centuries - for *Centennial* he started with the geological formation of the North America land mass in prehistoric times and made his slow but fascinating way forward from there.

His research such doorstop books he would settle in the place he was studying for as long as it took - he once likened his research method to that of a "total-immersion Baptist". He spent much of the Fifties based in Hawaii (the eponymous novel took seven years to research and write) and two decades later ended up settling in Austin, Texas after spending two years researching his novel about the Lone Star State. (He estimated he had read over 400 books for that novel.)

Some of this research manifested itself in chunky ethnological, philosophical or historical essays awkwardly stuck into his narratives. The former educationalist didn't deny his didactic intent and indeed was the first to express surprise that his works were so popular since parts of them were often undigestible.

His dedication to research was a manifestation of his driven nature. Well into his eight-



Michener: his dedication to research was so intense he called himself a 'total immersion Baptist' Photograph: AP

ies he would write for five hours each day, starting at 7.30am, seven days a week. He rarely took a holiday. Although he frequently visited Spain, which he regarded as his second home after discovering it as a student in the early Thirties, explored ancient cities in the Middle East, visited Arctic wastelands and South Sea islands, the motive was usually research rather than relaxation.

His drive presumably harked back to his impoverished childhood but he would

never discuss the psychological consequences of that harsh time in interviews, except to say: "When you have that kind of childhood you become self-sufficient or you go down the tubes. I missed a whole cycle of childhood but I've never used it as a device for self-pity."

Indeed, he seems to have blocked out completely whatever misery living in an institution caused him: he and his second wife adopted two sons, but the boys were returned to an orphanage when the mar-

riage ended. He was married three times. He married his third wife, Mari Yoriko Sabusawa, in 1955 and they were constant companions until her death in September 1994.

Michener, who in his life had survived three near-fatal plane crashes, had undergone a quintuple heart by-pass in 1986, and was already on dialysis treatment when his wife died. For over a decade, the globe-trotting writer who wrote a memoir called *The World Is My Home* (1992), was obliged to remain in

Austin because of his condition. He admitted that there was a time after his wife's death when he thought of giving up. "A person on dialysis undergoes very heavy and irritating treatment and in time it seems more than you can bear," he said. "There's always an easy out. Just don't go to hospital. Then, after two weeks, you're dead." A few days after his 90th birthday, James Michener took himself off his dialysis machine.

- Peter Guttridge

Viscount Deerpurst

Edward George William Omar Coventry, surfer: born 24 September 1957; styled Viscount Deerpurst since birth; died North Shore, Oahu, Hawaii 4 October 1997.

Ted Deerpurst was a serious surfer. But being born the son of the Earl of Coventry and thereby acquiring the nickname of "Lord Ted" in surfing circles, he had his work cut out convincing the cognoscent that he was anything other than a playboy. Sleeping in a beaten-up old car, being broke for long periods and having an American mother probably helped. His high point was reaching the semi-finals of the Sunset Beach in 1978. But even though he never hit the top 100 in the professional rankings, he was, in many ways, the most persistent and committed performer on the world circuit.

He had to be: Deerpurst always surfed his heart out in every contest he competed in and he was nearly always trounced. He was a hero of never-say-die optimism. He was the only surfer who read history between heats (his idol was Winston Churchill). Every now and then he would be cast down after another crushing defeat, but he would invariably bounce back. When

he was seven, his horse threw him and stomped on him and his mother just put him straight back in the saddle. "I guess I've been getting back on that horse ever since," he said.

One December in Hawaii, at the end of his worst-ever tour, he discovered he had slid down the ladder from 189 to 235 in the world. It was the same year that Martin Potter, another Brit, took the world championship. Anyone else would have thrown in the towel - not Deerpurst though. While admitting he didn't have a realistic shot at the title, he still came up with the ingenious aim of winning the Most Improved Surfer of the Year award: he figured he would only have to jump up to around a hundred or so from his current lowly position to achieve the fastest rise in the history of pro surfing. Another time he switched to snow boarding with the famous last words, "At least you can't drown in the mountains". He spent the next six months in hospital.

Although he once surfed, as an amateur, for England, Deerpurst was a footloose citizen of the surf who lived at different times in Australia, California, and finally on the North Shore of Hawaii, where the mightiest waves in the world come to die every winter and generally take a few surfers with them. He mas-

queraded as a university student, but whenever the surf was up school was out. He became an adept of big-wave conditions and once described surfing a 20-foot wave at Waimea Bay as being like "jumping off a three-storey house - and then having the house chase you down the street". His ultimate dream was of finding sponsors in Britain to fund the equipment for (or in) surfing in 30-foot plus waves.

Even though he was approaching 40, he still contended. He speculated that the lack of a long-term girlfriend to accompany him on his travels might have been holding him back. He tried to rectify matters by falling in love with an exotic dancer in a night-club in Honolulu, but the extremely jealous gangster who was her boyfriend stood in the way of his plans.

Ted Deerpurst was an altruist among surfers. He set up the Excalibur Foundation (named after the boards he shaped with their distinctive sword logo) to enable handicapped and underprivileged kids to go surfing. Towards the end of his life, he was proud to have become a fully integrated member of the Hawaiian community and was in the forefront of the battle to prevent overdevelopment of the North Shore. The hard-to-impress lo-



Deerpurst: 'sharing the spirit of surfing' John S. Callaghan

cals treated him with respect and called him "brother".

Many of them gathered to paddle out at Sunset Beach - the scene of his greatest triumph - in eight to ten feet surf and sprinkle his ashes upon the waves. "He wasn't on the fringe

of surfing," said Michael Willis, fellow surfer and shaper. "he was right at the heart".

The motto of Excalibur was "sharing the spirit of surfing". Ted Deerpurst was the energetic embodiment of that ideal.

- Andy Martin

John Rickman

John Eric Carter Rickman, broadcaster and journalist: born 28 May 1913; married 1939 Peggy Law (one son, two daughters); died Mithurst, West Sussex 13 October 1997.

By the simple yet symbolic art of raising his hat to his amused viewers, John Rickman played a significant part in introducing the sport of horse racing to the world of independent television.

The first man to introduce horse racing on an independent channel, on London Weekend Television's *World of Sport*, he was for many people an initial contact to the often baffling codes of Flat and National Hunt racing. His style was to greet his viewers with familiar, yet formal, charm and ease.

This he did for 23 years, and at a time when ITV had a major hold on armchair punters through its *ITV Seven*, a daunting task which saw people try and select the winners of seven races from two televised racecourses. When Rickman was on air there was always the feeling that racing was a sport not to be taken too seriously; it was a vessel of fun.

He certainly provided moments of fun when broadcasting live. On one occasion he was broadcasting from Sandown

racecourse near London when a telephone rang on his desk. Rickman, no doubt thinking it would be bad manners not to answer, picked it up and said: "I'm on air and very busy, I'll call you back." Less amusing was an occasion at Newcastle when his co-presenters, flying to the course, were delayed by a strong headwind. Rickman not only presented the show but also provided paddock commentary and actually called the races. In doing so he fulfilled perfectly the role of a broadcasting swan; while below the surface there may have been plenty of flapping, above water the impression was one of elegant calm.

There could not have been a neater dovelot for Rickman than a career which combined journalism and horseracing. His great-grandfather Tom Jennings trained the French-bred 1865 Derby winner and Triple Crown winner Gladiateur, while his son, also called Tom, trained three Classic winners himself. Such a lineage was the proud source for the title of Rickman's autobiography *Old Tom and Young John*, published in 1990. Rickman's father Eric, meanwhile, was a journalist, writing under the name Robin Goodfellow on the racing pages of the *Daily Mail*.

Rickman himself was educated at Haileybury and em-



Rickman: familiar yet formal

barked on his career in journalism serving on papers in Bristol. He started to follow in his father's footsteps in 1934 in joining the *Daily Mail*. During the Second World War, he served with the Gloucestershire Regiment. Afterwards, he returned to the *Daily Mail* and wrote under the Robin Goodfellow nom de plume.

He made a particular impression as a racing tipster, often winning the *Sporting Life* naps table, the competition held between journalists to gauge their ability to pinpoint winners.

Aside from his *Daily Mail* work, Rickman also wrote a number of books, among them *Homes of Sport* (1952) and *Eight Flat Racing Stables* (1979). Away from racing, Rickman had a holiday home on the Scottish island of Jura, and was also a keen golfer and dog breeder.

- Richard Griffiths

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

BIRTHS

ELLIS: On 16 September, to Diana (née Hubbert) and Richard, a son, James Frederick, a brother for Olivia.

DEATHS

BLACKS: Ian Stuart, author, scriptwriter and playwright, father of Isobel, Moray, Alison and Alan, died peacefully at home with his family in South Devon on 13 October 1997. Cremation service Wednesday 22 October, Exeter.

IN MEMORIAM

JOHNSON: Peter. Happy Birthday Peeps, Love you forever, Warren.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

TODAY: Princess Margaret attends a performance of Handel's *Messiah* at the Banqueting House, London SW1, in aid of Help for the Hospices and in thanksgiving for Hospice Care throughout the world. The Duchess of Kent, Patron, British Telecommunications Voices for Hospices 1997, attends a performance of the *Messiah*, Southwark Cathedral, London SE1. TOMORROW: The Duke of York, Admiral of the Sea Cadet Corps, takes the salute at the Sea Cadet Corps Tattoo Parade, London WC2.

Changing of the Guard

TODAY: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am. The Queen's Colour Squadron mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am. Band provided by the Grenadier Guard. TOMORROW: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am.

Birthdays

TODAY: Sir Timothy Bell, chairman, Lowe Bell Communications, 56; Mr Chuck Berry, rock and roll singer, 71; Miss Adele Biss, former chairman, British Tourist Authority, 53; Sir Michael Burton, ambassador to the Czech Republic, 60; Lord Clark of Kempson, former MP, 80; Professor Timothy Clark, Dean and Professor of Pulmonary Medicine, National Heart and Lung Institute, 62; Lord Cooke of Londonderry, chairman, Springvale ePS, 77; Mr George Dun, amateur jockey, 39; Lord Ellis-Thomas, former MP, 51; Mr Sam Galbraith, MP, 59; Mr George Gurney, Under-Secretary, Scottish Office, 52; Mr Harold Hankins, former principal, University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST), 67; Mr Jim Harding, chief executive, NSPCC, 55; Lord Kimball, former MP, 69; Miss Marina Navratilova, tennis player, 41; Sir James Nurse QC, former HM Procurator-General and Treasury Solicitor, 65; Sir Joseph Pope, consultant, TO International, 83; Dr Kate Pretty, principal, Homerton College, Cambridge, 52; Lady Saltoun, chief of Clan Fraser, 67; Mr George C. Scott, actor, 70; Mr Gladstone Small, cricketer, 36; Mr Michael Stich, tennis champion, 41; Lord Irvine QC, president, PRIMA Europe, 69; Air Chief Marshal Sir Peter Terry, former Governor of Gibraltar, 71; Mr Pierre Trudeau CH, former Canadian Prime Minister, 78; Vice-Admiral Sir James Willis, former Chief of Naval Staff, Australia, 74.

TOMORROW: Mr Jack Anderson, newspaper columnist, 75; Sir Leslie Boreham, former High Court judge, 79; Professor Sir Robert Boyd, physicist, 75; Dr David Clark MP, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, 58; Mr David Cornwall (John Le Carré), novelist, 66; Sir John Cullen, former chairman, Health and Safety Commission, 71; Lord Evans of Parkside, former MP, 67; The Very Rev David

Frayne, Provost of Blackburn, 63; Mr Bernard Hepton, actor, 72; Mr Gavin Hewitt, former ambassador to Croatia, 53; Dr Robin Holloway, composer and Lecturer in Music, Cambridge University, 54; Mr Paul Holmer, former ambassador to Romania, 74; Sir Robert Jennings QC, former president, International Court of Justice, 84; Mrs Rosamund John, actress, 84; Mr Graham Lock, former chief executive, Amalgamated Metal, 66; Mr Bill Morris, trade-union leader, 59; Miss Mary Nicholas, broadcaster, 67; Admiral of the Fleet Sir Michael Pollock, 81; Sir Allan Ramsay, former ambassador to Morocco, 60; Air Chief Marshal Sir Anthony Skingley, former Deputy Commander in Chief, Allied Forces Central Europe, 64; Sir Harold Walker, former ambassador to Iraq, 65; Major Sir Patrick Wall, former MP, 81; Mr Peter Whiston, architect, 85.

Lectures

TODAY

National Gallery: Steven Adams, "Cityscapes (II): Monet, *The Gare St-Lazare*", 12pm.

National Portrait Gallery: Margaret Blamie, "William Hogarth and His Comic Muse", 3pm.

Tate Gallery: Laurence Bradbury, "Turning to the Bottle for Inspiration", 1pm.

British Museum: Lorna Oakes, "Growth of the Assyrian Empire", 1.15pm.

National Portrait Gallery: Margaret Blamie, "William Hogarth and His Comic Muse", 3pm.

TOMORROW

Tate Gallery: Laurence Bradbury, "Aureate Magic: pigment into gold", 2.30pm.

National Portrait Gallery: Paul Webb, "Julie Andrews", 3pm.

FAITH & REASON

At prayer with the new Carey Conservatism

The Church of England may once again be becoming the Tory Party at prayer, suggests Paul Handley - but not for reasons which will please either organisation.

Perhaps it's just the headline - or maybe the tired look about the eyes - but I keep getting William Hague and George Carey mixed up. It has been particularly bad this week with the pair of them making long and important speeches within four days of each other: both staring into the future, both very definitely not seeing any void.

It was Tony Blair, of course, who first demonstrated how a party-conference address could sound like a sermon; but it wasn't until this week that I realised how a sermon, or rather, a lecture, by the Archbishop could sound like a party-conference address. Like William Hague's conference address, to be precise. Mr Hague told the party faithful at Blackpool last Friday: "Fresh, open, clear and united: that's what I wanted to see, and that is what has been delivered." Dr Carey's themes in his "vision for the millennium" lecture in Leicestershire on Monday night were confidence,

mission (which meant openness) and unity.

"Never again will we have a divided organisation," said Mr Hague. "Unity and interdependence is God's vision for his creation," said Dr Carey. "Never again will the voice of our members go unheard," said Mr Hague. "How very truly we have been in the past to recognise the ministry of the laity!" said Dr Carey. And so on. One of them used the phrase "I believe" 11 times, and it wasn't Dr Carey.

Perhaps the similarities in style are not that surprising, since both leaders have the same problem: a large, well-established organisation which is used to being in power and which is having to cope with the fact that it isn't. In the case of the Conservative Party, the loss of power came suddenly, and the numb, shell-shocked expression was still to be seen on the faces in Blackpool. For the Church of England there has been no election to lose; just a slow decline of numbers and influence over many years, leaving the faithful looking resigned and morose. In response, Mr Hague and Dr Carey have adopted similar tactics.

First, be honest about the past. "I want to tell you about a changing conservatism that acknowledges its mistakes," said Mr Hague. "I have never

denied the fact that statistics show numerical decline," said Dr Carey.

Second: present things in the best possible light. For Mr Hague, this is easy: anything that the Labour Government does which is successful and popular, must be shown to have originated in a Tory policy. Dr Carey has to rely a little more heavily on rhetoric. In his lecture, he listed some of the things we should celebrate about the modern Church of England. The simultaneous translation is mine. "Our capacity for reform and self-renewal has been demonstrated again and again. [With our backs to the wall, we've had to do something.] The empowerment of lay people. [Not enough priests.] Burgeoning numbers of non-stipendiary ministers. [Not enough money to pay them.] Reforms in the Church Commissioners and our national institutions. [Nearly not enough money to pay me.] The ordination of thousands of women to the priesthood. [Not enough men; besides, it's easier to get women to work for nothing.] Dynamic evangelising initiatives. [See next point.]"

Third, and most important: recruit or die. Last week's *Sunday Times* carried a critical report about Church of England bishops going "soft on sin", despite repeated claims that the Church upholds the institution of marriage, sev-

eral bishops had admitted that they would not anathematise couples who were "living in sin". Three days later, the *Jewish Chronicle* carried an attack on William Hague by the former Chief Rabbi, Lord Jakobovits, who accused him of ditching traditional morality. "The Conservative Party used to insist on maintaining family values. It now wants to abandon this for a few votes."

In all this the Anglicans use a similar lexicon to the Tories. For both organisations, then, the discovery of a liberal, compassionate heart has grown out of failure and desperation. This does not make it any less genuine; confident, successful organisations seldom have the desire or the capacity to draw in new and potential disruptive recruits; or, if they do draw them in, they expect the recruits to change, not the organisation. With such a mindset, the organisation, be it a party or a church, doesn't stay successful for long.

So, is the Church of England becoming, once again, the Conservative Party at prayer? This was the one point where the two leaders differed. Mr Hague told his supporters that his party had "got up off its knees". Dr Carey hopes that his supporters will stay on theirs.

• Faith & Reason is edited by Paul Valley

Footsie takes heart from bid rumours in the financial sector

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN
STOCK
MARKET
REPORTER
OF THE YEAR

The stock market endured just a modest hint of jitters in the final run-up to the tenth anniversary of the crash.

With the last day of quote-driven trading for blue chips causing some anxiety and the expiry of the October FTSE options it could be argued there was enough to dwell on without worrying about any superstitious possibility of history repeating itself.

At its lowest Footsie was down 39.7 points. With New York showing a degree of hesitation after its overnight fall there was, just for a moment, a danger the market would take fright and suffer a sharp decline.

In the event Footsie closed off 16.8 points at 5,371.1. The FTSE SmallCap index actually made headway.

A clutch of financial shares led Footsie. National West-

minster Bank, on growing speculation of a deal over its underperforming investment arm or even a bid for the whole caboodle from the likes of Barclays, added 5p to 972.5p. Barchays rose 24p to 1,675p. Abbey National, again on talk of deals, rose to a peak of 990.5p, up 24p.

Commercial Union, currently the market's favourite target stretched 11p to 876p, another reward, and Royal & Sun Alliance, the subject this week of profit worries, recovered 12p to 636.5p.

Royal Bank of Scotland, bucking the banking aspirations of the ubiquitous Richard Branson, put on 12.5p to 699.5p. A signalled meeting with fund managers on Tuesday was probably a more important influence. Hambros, as break-up hopes again went the rounds, rose 14p to 288.5p.

TI Group, the engineer, was the major casualty, off 38p to 631.5p. Dredner Kleinwort Benson appeared to do the damage. It was said to have cut its profit estimates from £231m to £220m for this year and from £265m to £255m for next. Dividend expectations were also reigned back and the shares downgraded to neutral from buy. GKN, off 41.5p to 1,432.5p, and LucasVerity, 7.5p to 218p, were marked down in sympathy. The failure of the widely rumoured takeover bid to materialise left BICC off 8p to 200p.

J Sainsbury, 7.5p higher at 465.5p, was one to benefit from analytical comments. Societe Generale Strauss Turnball expects interim figures later this month to emerge 5 per cent higher at £405m and is looking for £725m for the year. NatWest Securities

upped its year's estimate by £25m to £720m. Last year the supervisors chain produced £651m.

Chloride, the electrical group, improved 1.25p to 36.5p. The shares are seen as undervalued judged by the £36m BTR is paying for the Coffee Republic, the coffee bar group, had another strong

session, ending 5.5p higher at 33.5p. Another newcomer Metalstrussia attracted further attention, gaining 13p to 92.5p. Xaar, a printing technology group, ended at 113.5p from a 110p placing.

Medisys, until recently known as Biocure, improved 2p to 23.5p. The medical systems designer and maker has achieved marketing approval from the American Food and Drug Administration for a needle incinerator which destroys hypodermic needles.

Siber Energy held at 22.5p, a peak. Henderson Crosthwaite describe the shares, which arrived in April at 10p, as a "speculative buy". The company has interests in two Russian oil exploration operations.

Highland Distilleries, the Famous Grouse group which has been dragged down by

fears it may have to help out its French associate, Remy Cointreau, flew 14p higher to 311.5p.

There are suggestions it could emerge as the buyer of Dewar's, the Scotch whisky GMG Brands (Grand Metropolitan and Guinness) have been ordered to give up in Europe and are likely to be asked to surrender in the US.

Some suggest Dewar's, the top selling Scotch in the US, could be worth more than £500m, a price probably out of Highland's reach.

But if GMG break-up ownership of Dewar's Highland could, say, buy the European operations which command profits of £10m a year.

Chemical Design, which slumped more than 100p in two days, rallied 40p to 130p; engineer Carbo improved 2.5p to 32.5p.

TAKING STOCK

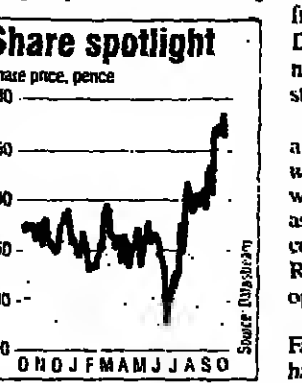
Serif, the security printer, added 1.25p to 4.75p, highest for more than a year. It looks as though the long-suspected revamping exercise will soon be under way.

Philip Davies, owner of Warm Welcome, a hotel and pub operator, and John Gulliver, a US lawyer have almost 21 per cent of the capital following a steady build up. Serif has been bedevilled by problems for years.

It has made losses for the last five years. The shares were 31p three years ago.

Select Appointments, little changed at 612p, should lift profits from £19.9m to £32.5m this year, believes stockbroker Granville Davies.

Analyst Simon Laphrore looks for the recruitment group to hit £38.7m next year. The shares were down to 36.5p four years ago.



52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E
100	100.00	100.00	100	100.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	100	100.00	100.00	100	100.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
101	101.00	101.00	101	101.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	101	101.00	101.00	101	101.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
102	102.00	102.00	102	102.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	102	102.00	102.00	102	102.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
103	103.00	103.00	103	103.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	103	103.00	103.00	103	103.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
104	104.00	104.00	104	104.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	104	104.00	104.00	104	104.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
105	105.00	105.00	105	105.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	105	105.00	105.00	105	105.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
106	106.00	106.00	106	106.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	106	106.00	106.00	106	106.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
107	107.00	107.00	107	107.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	107	107.00	107.00	107	107.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
108	108.00	108.00	108	108.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	108	108.00	108.00	108	108.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
109	109.00	109.00	109	109.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	109	109.00	109.00	109	109.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
110	110.00	110.00	110	110.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	110	110.00	110.00	110	110.00	0.00	0.00	10.00

52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E
111	111.00	111.00	111	111.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	111	111.00	111.00	111	111.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
112	112.00	112.00	112	112.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	112	112.00	112.00	112	112.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
113	113.00	113.00	113	113.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	113	113.00	113.00	113	113.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
114	114.00	114.00	114	114.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	114	114.00	114.00	114	114.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
115	115.00	115.00	115	115.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	115	115.00	115.00	115	115.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
116	116.00	116.00	116	116.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	116	116.00	116.00	116	116.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
117	117.00	117.00	117	117.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	117	117.00	117.00	117	117.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
118	118.00	118.00	118	118.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	118	118.00	118.00	118	118.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
119	119.00	119.00	119	119.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	119	119.00	119.00	119	119.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
120	120.00	120.00	120	120.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	120	120.00	120.00	120	120.00	0.00	0.00	10.00

52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E
121	121.00	121.00	121	121.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	121	121.00	121.00	121	121.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
122	122.00	122.00	122	122.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	122	122.00	122.00	122	122.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
123	123.00	123.00	123	123.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	123	123.00	123.00	123	123.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
124	124.00	124.00	124	124.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	124	124.00	124.00	124	124.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
125	125.00	125.00	125	125.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	125	125.00	125.00	125	125.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
126	126.00	126.00	126	126.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	126	126.00	126.00	126	126.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
127	127.00	127.00	127	127.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	127	127.00	127.00	127	127.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
128	128.00	128.00	128	128.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	128	128.00	128.00	128	128.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
129	129.00	129.00	129	129.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	129	129.00	129.00	129	129.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
130	130.00	130.00	130	130.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	130	130.00	130.00	130	130.00	0.00	0.00	10.00

52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E
131	131.00	131.00	131	131.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	131	131.00	131.00	131	131.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
132	132.00	132.00	132	132.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	132	132.00	132.00	132	132.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
133	133.00	133.00	133	133.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	133	133.00	133.00	133	133.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
134	134.00	134.00	134	134.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	134	134.00	134.00	134	134.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
135	135.00	135.00	135	135.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	135	135.00	135.00	135	135.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
136	136.00	136.00	136	136.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	136	136.00	136.00	136	136.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
137	137.00	137.00	137	137.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	137	137.00	137.00	137	137.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
138	138.00	138.00	138	138.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	138	138.00	138.00	138	138.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
139	139.00	139.00	139	139.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	139	139.00	139.00	139	139.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
140	140.00	140.00	140	140.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	140	140.00	140.00	140	140.00	0.00	0.00	10.00

52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E
141	141.00	141.00	141	141.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	141	141.00	141.00	141	141.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
142	142.00	142.00	142	142.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	142	142.00	142.00	142	142.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
143	143.00	143.00	143	143.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	143	143.00	143.00	143	143.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
144	144.00	144.00	144	144.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	144	144.00	144.00	144	144.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
145	145.00	145.00	145	145.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	145	145.00	145.00	145	145.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
146	146.00	146.00	146	146.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	146	146.00	146.00	146	146.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
147	147.00	147.00	147	147.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	147	147.00	147.00	147	147.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
148	148.00	148.00	148	148.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	148	148.00	148.00	148	148.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
149	149.00	149.00	149	149.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	149	149.00	149.00	149	149.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
150	150.00	150.00	150	150.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	150	150.00	150.00	150	150.00	0.00	0.00	10.00

30000	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
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Railtrack increases West Coast investment to £2bn in revenue-sharing deal with Virgin

Railtrack is set to invest an extra £500m upgrading the West Coast Main Line as part of an innovative risk and revenue sharing agreement with the operator of the line, Virgin Rail. Michael Harrison examines the funding of the most ambitious rail project this century.

The additional investment by Railtrack will take spending on the modernisation of the West Coast Main Line to around £2bn and allow trains to travel at up to 140 mph. Together with the new fleet of tilting trains Virgin is ordering for the line, total investment will reach £2.5bn.

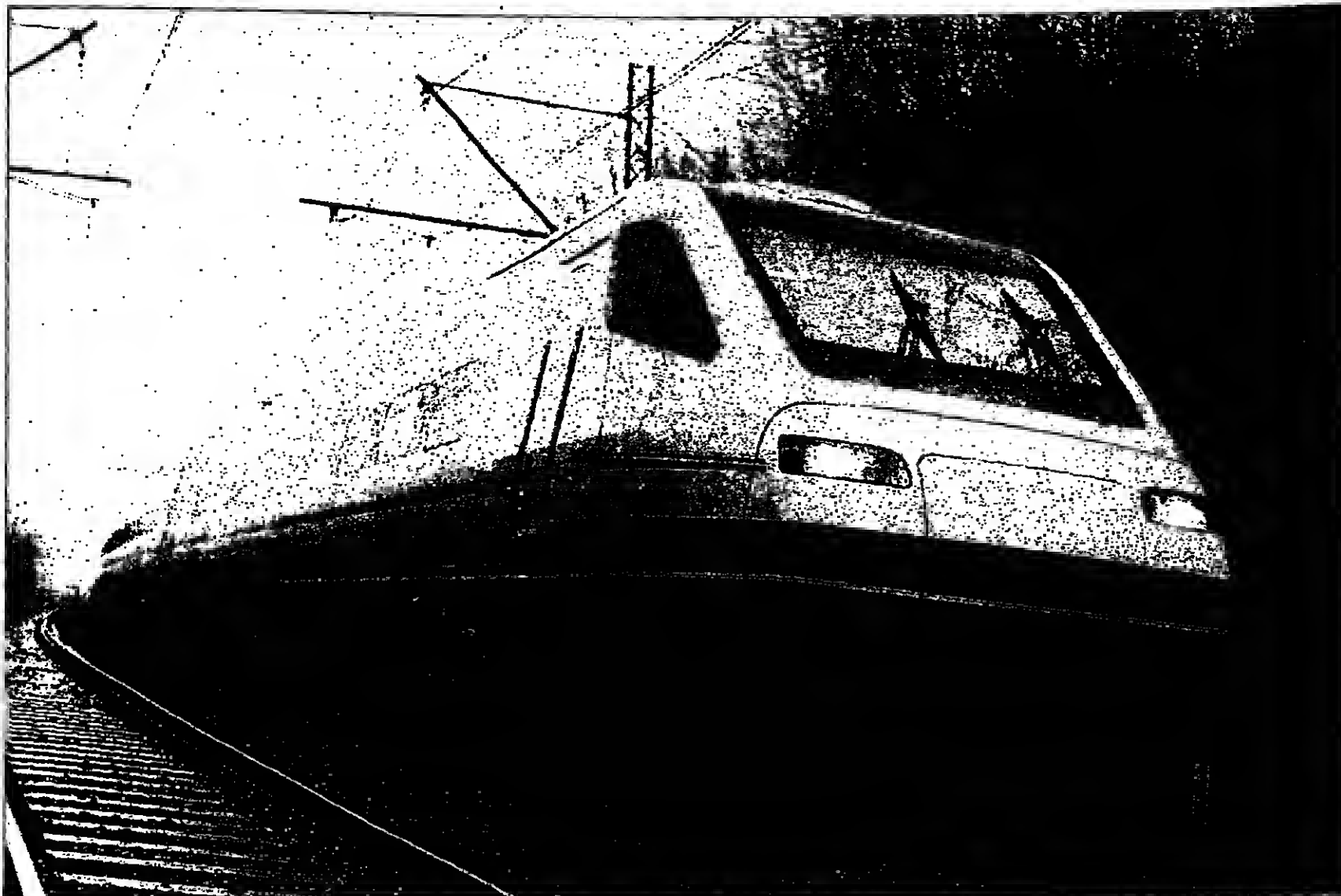
Railtrack, which owns the country's network of tracks, signalling and stations, had already agreed to invest £1.5bn to update the line and enable it to take tilting trains. This will increase maximum speeds to 125mph.

But the extra £500m will allow speeds to be increased by another 15 mph. This will reduce the journey time from London to Manchester to under two hours and allow Glasgow to be reached in under four hours. Birmingham will be about one hour away from the capital.

In return for the extra investment, Railtrack will take a share of the revenues from the line. These were £220m last year but Virgin believes that the new rolling stock and reduced journey times, together with worsening road congestion, could mean revenues doubling over the next 10 years.

Railtrack, whose overall investment programme totals £10bn over the next 15 years, is expected to complete negotiations with Virgin and announce the revenue sharing deal in the next three to four weeks.

An announcement about which of five competing bidders has won the train order is due around Christmas. Virgin is buying 46 trains for the West Coast Mainline and a further 298 carriages for its other passenger franchise, Cross Country Trains, in an order worth a total of £750m. The Cross Country trains will be diesel drive and the West Coast trains will be electric. But all the rolling stock will be of the tilting variety



The Pendolino tilting train, made by Fiat of Italy, is among the front-runners for an order by Virgin, which is spending £500m on rolling stock for the upgraded line

since some of Cross Country's services use parts of the West Coast Mainline.

The three front-runners for the order are Fiat of Italy, which has teamed up with GEC to offer its Pendolino tilting train, Adtranz, which is a partnership between ABB and Daimler-Benz, and Siemens of Germany. The other two bidders are Bombardier of Spain and CAF of Spain. Final bids are due in on 5 November.

Whichever bidder wins the contest, the trains will be built in Britain. GEC's facilities are in Birmingham while Adtranz owns the old British Rail Engineering works in Derby. Siemens would probably negotiate to carry out assembly work in the UK if it is successful. Fiat has most experience of tilting trains. The Pendolino has been in commercial service since 1976 and there are now 55 trains in operation in Italy, Switzerland, Germany and Finland. Great North Eastern Railways, which took over the East Coast Mainline, has already ordered two Pendolinos and has options to buy a further five.

Although Virgin Rail will lease the trains rather than buy them outright it will help finance the expansion through a stock market flotation planned for early next year. The flotation is designed to raise new money, with neither Virgin Rail nor any of its venture capital partners selling shares.

Attention then turned to the week's repeated story that Barclays has not yet given up its ambitions to take over NatWest to dominate high street banking in Britain. Martin Taylor, the chief executive of Barclays who has come in for forceful criticism of his handling of the BZW sale, is understood to harbour a strong wish to tie up a deal that would give the combined bank almost 50 per cent share of retail accounts, cards and small business banking.

Rumours send NatWest and Barclays higher

Another day of frantic speculation in bank stocks sent NatWest and Barclays sharply higher yesterday. Tom Stevenson, Financial Editor, reports on the rumour mill which could agree on the deals but not the names in the frame.

City gossip had both BZW and NatWest Markets on the block this weekend, with a range of buyers for both investment banks. Both parent banks treated the increasingly frenetic speculation with their usual haughty disdain but shares in Barclays closed 24p higher at £16.75 and NatWest rose 36p to 972.5p on the rumours.

The most persistent story was Barclays concluding a sale of BZW to Credit Suisse First Boston, which occupies the building next to BZW's new headquarters in the Canary Wharf development in London's docklands.

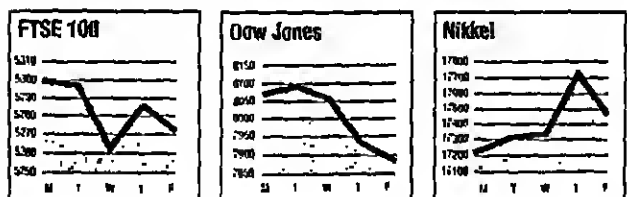
One source close to the sale said: "An early sale would be highly desirable and CSFB would be a highly logical choice". Barclays would only add: "The process is continuing and proceeding as you would expect."

With BZW known to be up for sale, rather more interest was provoked by speculation that NatWest might be on the brink of announcing a sale of its NatWest Markets subsidiary. There was confusion, however, about whether ABN Amro was poised to swoop or Deutsche Morgan Grenfell. A NatWest spokesman said, predictably: "We never comment on market rumours at all."

Attention then turned to the week's repeated story that Barclays has not yet given up its ambitions to take over NatWest to dominate high street banking in Britain. Martin Taylor, the chief executive of Barclays who has come in for forceful criticism of his handling of the BZW sale, is understood to harbour a strong wish to tie up a deal that would give the combined bank almost 50 per cent share of retail accounts, cards and small business banking.

Sentiment in NatWest was also boosted by rumours that Chip Kruger, the new chief executive of troubled NatWest Markets, was about to announce his conclusions on the way forward for the business.

STOCK MARKETS



Index	Close	Change	Change(%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield(%)
FTSE 100	5271.30	-16.80	-0.32	5330.80	3900.40	3.31
FTSE 250	4850.40	-13.40	-0.27	4963.80	4348.10	3.26
FTSE 350	2836.20	-7.80	-0.27	2950.30	1948.20	3.29
FTSE All Share	2480.18	-7.10	-0.29	2492.41	1925.79	3.27
FTSE SmallCap	2406.2	0.90	0.04	2405.30	2128.40	3.03
FTSE Preceding	1315.1	-0.30	-0.02	1346.50	1199.70	3.19
FTSE AIM	1013.8	3.20	0.32	1138.00	1003.80	0.96
Dow Jones	7886.82	-52.56	-0.66	8268.31	5972.73	1.89
Nikkei	17478.42	-223.07	-1.29	21612.30	17204.70	0.82
Hang Seng	13801.01	33.75	0.25	16673.27	12055.17	3.06
Dax	4051.50	-56.72	-1.39	4408.95	2859.25	1.96

INTEREST RATES

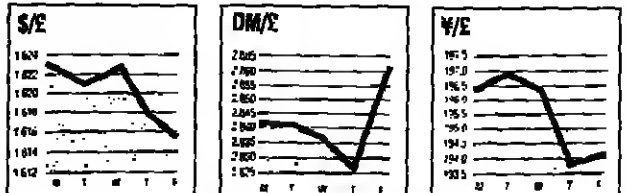


Index	2 month	3 month	6 month	1 year	1 yr 6m	10 year	1 yr 6m	Long bond	1 yr 6m
UK	7.35	7.30	7.25	7.15	6.99	6.49	6.49	6.49	6.49
US	6.78	6.25	6.06	5.86	5.13	4.40	4.42	4.38	4.38
Japan	0.53	0.04	0.59	-0.07	1.98	-0.91	2.60	-0.83	-0.83
Germany	3.66	0.55	4.20	0.96	5.69	-0.29	6.24	-0.64	-0.64

MAIN PRICE CHANGES

Rises	Falls
Highland Dis 311.50 14.00 4.71	TI Grp 631.50 -38.00 -5.68
United Ass 502.50 22.00 4.58	BICC 200.00 -8.00 -3.95
Hammer 255.50 10.00 4.02	LucasVarley 218.00 -7.50 -3.33
Nat West 972.50 36.00 3.84	Bryant Grp 129 -4.00 -3.01

CURRENCIES



Pound	Dollar	Yen
Dollar 1.6156 -0.34c 1.5869	DM 1.6189 +0.13p 0.6202	Yen 120.15 +0.05 1.5431
D-Mark 2.8618 +3.19p 2.4922	Yen 120.15 +0.05 1.5431	Nov 97.80
Yen 194.12 -0.32 178.87	Nov 97.80	Nov 97.80
£ index 99.80 -0.50 89.00	Nov 97.80	Nov 97.80

OTHER INDICATORS

Index	Close	Chg	% Chg	Yr Ago	Index	Close	Chg	% Chg	Yr Ago
Brent Oil (\$)	20.00	0.51	2.42	24.21	GDP	112.80	3.50	109.0	24.06
Gold (\$)	324.55	-1.30	-0.40	380.80	RPI	159.30	3.6	158.76	Nov
Silver (\$)	4.92	-0.19	-3.7	4.97	Base Rates	7.00	5.75		

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Formula One obsession led to £50m Landhurst fraud

Ted Ball and David Ashworth, the two directors of Landhurst Leasing who pleaded guilty to corruption charges last month, appeared at the Old Bailey yesterday to enter their pleas of mitigation. John Wilcock looks at how their lucrative luxury car leasing business became deeply corrupt when they expanded into motor racing.

John Snow, the England test cricket legend, gave evidence yesterday on behalf of one of the two men whose "obsession" with Formula One racing drove them to commit a £50m fraud. Ball, founder of Landhurst Leasing, saw his dream of being a Grand Prix major player shattered in 1992 when his company collapsed following an investigation by accountants Arthur Andersen.

The accountants unearthed a web of corrupt cash payments by a corporate client, Middlebridge Group Ltd (MGL), to Ball and Ashworth. Landhurst's finance director, Both pleaded guilty to corruption charges last month. Mr Justice Pownall heard their counsel's pleas in mitigation yesterday. They are due to be sentenced on Monday.

The Old Bailey heard how Ball's company provided £1m to MGL to buy the historic Brabham Racing Team in 1990. This was in itself a breach of Landhurst's covenants with its banks. Ron Thwaites QC, representing Ball, claimed his client's passion for racing "blinded" him to his business commitments and he and Ashworth "cooked the books" to hide from the Guinness Mahon merchant banking adviser the support they were giving to Middlebridge. In return Ball and Ashworth demanded £420,000 in backhanders.

The court heard that when Ashworth was first offered a cheque by Middlebridge, he said: "Don't be silly, I want cash." At another time Ashworth arrived at a motorway service station on the M1 by taxi and was given a briefcase containing £60,000 in banknotes by a Middlebridge contact. In total, £8.5m was advanced to Middlebridge.

Landhurst's banks were led by Guinness Mahon, and included the Prudential, and several Swiss and Canadian banks. The court heard how, when Andersen were called in, only £70m of £121m lent by the banks to Landhurst was recoverable. Of the £7.2m which MGL owed to Landhurst under various leases, only £1m was recoverable. Fast bowler Mr Snow, who played for Sussex and England, was called as a character witness to explain Ball's other "obsession" - supporting charity. The cricketer said he had known Ball for nearly 20 years, first through business and then through the charity the Lords Taverners, which raises cash through cricket matches.

Maid shocks investors with profit warning

Maid the electronic information company which earlier this month doubled its size by buying Knight-Ridder Information, yesterday shocked investors by issuing a profits warning. The news came as Maid unveiled details of a share placing to raise £119.9m for the acquisition. Cathy Newman reports.

Executive who will head up the newly merged group, denied the statement was a profit warning. "I see it as a clarification of current trading," he said. "I thought the statement was very upbeat. We don't want people to be under any illusions of the impact of a deal of this size for a small company such as Maid."

Mr Wagner said the placing of 54.5 million shares at 220p a share had been two times oversubscribed, reflecting excitement about the deal in the City. Chris Sielern, technology analyst at Bryan Garnier, a brokers specialising in technology stocks, said the warning on revenues had come out of the blue but was not a worry.

"Sure, it's a profits warning, but they still expect to have growth above 40 per cent per annum on the Maid side of the business," he said. He added that in the past few months, management had been focusing on other things. "This has just affected one quarter, which is why I'm not really worried about it."

The merged company, to be called the Dialog Corporation, will be the world's largest online information provider. Maid will raise the rest of the money needed for the \$420m (£261m) acquisition through junk bonds and new debt.

However, Dan Wagner, the company's flamboyant chief executive, who will head up the newly merged group, denied the statement was a profit warning. "I see it as a clarification of current trading," he said. "I thought the statement was very upbeat. We don't want people to be under any illusions of the impact of a deal of this size for a small company such as Maid."

Vauxhall to cut its dealer network by a quarter

Vauxhall is to cut its car dealer network by a quarter in an attempt to boost its profitability. Chris Godsmark, Business examines the latest shake-out in the UK car market.

The cuts in Vauxhall's dealer chain have been outlined internally by Nick Reilly, chairman and managing director, as part of a policy called Managed Area Approach (MAA). It would see the current network of 520 dealerships reduced to around 380 to 400, although some dealers believe it could see Vauxhall cut almost 200 of its sites.

The policy would see bigger dealer groups invited to expand their presence in urban areas in a move which is likely to intensify the pressure on smaller, independent outlets. Some 430 separate businesses currently run Vauxhall's dealer network, a figure which will drop as companies with bigger resources take control of larger groups of sites.

The manufacturer has asked dealers to invest heavily in extra customer service benefits, but smaller franchises were unlikely to be able to afford to take on further staff. Vauxhall, part of the US giant General Motors, confirmed the cutbacks, but said that at the same time dealers would be opening smaller satellite outlets, many of which would not sell cars but would provide servicing facilities. This could increase the overall network to 600 sites.

Orange raises £1.75bn for foreign spending spree

Orange, the newest of the UK's four mobile phone networks, has raised £1.75bn from its bankers to fund a foreign spending spree. Chris Godsmark, Business Correspondent, outlines the company's expansion plans.

The new borrowing facility, revealed yesterday, is thought to be the largest debt financing deal ever secured by a European mobile phone network. The £1.75bn of loans raised for Orange will replace the company's existing £1.2bn facility, arranged two years ago in advance of the group's flotation. It means the company will be able to draw on £550m of extra resources.

Graham Howe, Orange's finance director, said the company would keep the additional spending power in reserve to pursue acquisitions abroad. Orange has already said it intends to bid for mobile licences in the Netherlands and Belgium, while earlier this year the group sealed a £45m deal in Austria, to take a 17.45 per cent stake in a consortium awarded the country's third digital mobile licence.

"This gives us the opportunity of participating in a number of overseas ventures. But we've got no clear-cut idea of how that money will be spent," admitted Mr Howe. Analysts were surprised yesterday that Orange said it would not need to draw on the extra cash to pay for its £800m investment programme in its core UK network. In August the company announced an ambitious expansion strategy to double its number of signal base stations from 3,000 to 6,000 by the end of next year.

The new borrowing facility was put together by two US banks, Chase Manhattan and JP Morgan.

Mr Howe said all of the 25 further lenders invited into the deal had taken up the offer, and the loan facility was 70 per cent oversubscribed. It will cut the interest rate on the loans from 1.5 percentage points above short-term money market rates, to 1 per cent.



JEREMY WARNER ON NIGHTMARES ON WALL STREET AND BRANSON'S BANKING FORAY

We should be relieved if it's only a repeat of 1987

Few people can have failed to realise that this weekend is the tenth anniversary of the stock market crash of 1987. The newspapers and brokers' circulars have been full of it. All of them have pointed to the uncanny similarities between then and now. The rise in the Dow Jones Industrial Average over the last four years superimposes almost exactly on the chart running up in the 1987 crash. Economic conditions, both in the US and Britain, are also very similar. Buoyant, low inflation, conditions reigned supreme.

And exactly the same sort of things were being said about why the world economy had changed fundamentally in a way that meant the massive economic corrections of the past would never be repeated. We have entered a "new paradigm", to use the jargon of the US, which has all but abolished the business cycle, improved productivity levels beyond anything believed possible before, and changed asset valuations for ever.

Despite these parallels, few people believe we are heading for anything like another 1987. One of the more fashionable theories at the moment suggests that at worst equity values will plateau for a while before moving upwards again. I've been wrong about Wall Street for so long now that I am scarcely best qualified to comment on these matters, but I believe this optimistic view of stock valuations is

dangerously complacent, that what we have seen on Wall Street is the build up of a speculative bubble comparable in scope to the one that consumed the Japanese stock market in the early 1990s.

When it bursts, as eventually it must, the fall out is going to be equally catastrophic, perhaps worse given the size and importance of the US economy. If we are about to see a mere repeat of 1987, then we should all feel mighty relieved about it. 1987 was not a proper crash at all. In the scale of things, it was but a minor hiccup in a 20-year bull market. What comes next is going to be a lot more serious than that.

The number of pointers to the extremes of Wall Street's position have become too numerous to list. Here's one I came across which seems particularly vivid and striking. The average American would have to work nearly four times as long today to buy a single share in the Standard and Poors as he would have had to in the early 1980s. Using the same yardstick, he would have to work twice as long today as at the top of the last great bull market of the 1920s.

It seems highly probable that the boom on Wall Street has begun to contribute to economic growth in the US—that it is the stock market that has begun to drive the American economy rather than the other way round. Money can be raised for next to nothing, forecast rates of return have reached fairy-tale proportions, an invest-

ment boom of quite staggering proportions has built up, both within the stock market and in new business ventures. That the stampede will eventually reverse is not in question. Nor is its effect when it does—an investment freeze and recession exacerbated by a stock market crash. The only question is when. At this stage, the simmering trade row with Japan doesn't look serious enough to trigger it, but you never know.

How it is that Richard Branson ever finds the time to go hot air ballooning is anyone's guess. Even by his own hyperactive standards, this has been quite a year for the billionaire entrepreneur. In the last fortnight alone he's launched two new business ventures, been lambasted over poor standards of service at Virgin Trains, and hired Chris Evans to Virgin Radio. His latest escapade is One, billed with characteristic hyperbole as "a revolutionary banking account set to turn personal banking on its head".

On queue, Mr Branson was available for photo call yesterday resplendent in bowler hat, rolled umbrella and Virgin-style red pin stripe. Doesn't this man know when to stop? And should we be trusting someone with a finger to so many pies to handle our money?

Taking the two questions in turn, Mr Branson's achievement and brilliance as an entrepreneur has been to establish the

Virgin name as a powerful brand that can be used over a wide and diverse range of consumer products. Mr Branson personifies what the brand stands for—youth, daring, the faintly anarchistic, fun, anti-establishment, and the independent.

Not for Mr Branson the modern day corporate mantra of "focus" and sticking to a particular business. He comes at it from the other direction, using his hand to poach business from the soft under belly of a whole range of established and complacent oligopolies. The dizzying collection of unrelated businesses that now make up the Virgin empire would make your average fund manager, if this were a publicly quoted company, quite ill with anxiety. Had the City had any say in the matter, it would have stopped Mr Branson ages ago.

Mr Branson's latest foray—into the world of direct banking—is typical of his technique. Virgin is hardly the first to spot the business opportunity that lies in the fat margins and general complacency of the established banking market. The supermarket groups and a number of other species of low cost banking were ahead of him. But in introducing one stop banking which lumps together your mortgage, savings, current account and other loans, he and his partner, Royal Bank of Scotland, have come up with a simple, clever and genuinely new marketing idea with widespread appeal. It won't suit everyone, and to be honest,

those with the time and sophistication to do these things would undoubtedly be better off financially by continuing to customise their own personal finance needs. Indeed this new banking service only really pays for those whose saving deposits come close to the size of their mortgage and other loans. Such people ought in any case to be asking themselves why they are in this position.

What is more, though the scheme has plenty to commend it in terms of convenience, there are obvious dangers. For the ill disciplined, there is every incentive to spend all the equity value of your property. There appears to be nothing that would compel the account holder to save in a manner which would allow him to pay off his loan on retirement.

What I'm struggling to say here is that this is an idea with such obvious and widespread appeal that it is quite astonishing no one has ever tried it before. On the other hand it doesn't offer significant cost advantages over traditional, more piecemeal methods of banking and there are clear dangers with the whole thing. Classic Branson. People will flock to this product if for no other reason that it carries the Virgin name. Because a parsimonious Scottish bank lies behind the whole thing, nobody needs to be too concerned about Mr Branson's creditworthiness either. But is this really such a revolution in personal banking? I think not.

Waterstone presents WH Smith's new head with a baptism of fire

Richard Handover, the new WH Smith chief executive, has already had to cope with a restructuring approach from Tim Waterstone, the company's own demerger announcement and criticism that he is not the right man for the job. And all in his first couple of weeks.

But as Nigel Cope, City Correspondent hears, he still has to convince institutional shareholders that he can steer the group into calmer waters.



Richard Handover: 'It's been an amazing couple of weeks and a steep learning curve'

Richard Handover is little more than a fortnight into the job as chief executive of the troubled retailer WH Smith and it is no surprise that he is looking a little crumpled. His face is etched with deep lines and he is coming untucked at the back. And when he walks across the room you can see there is a small bubble in the seat of his trousers. With his gaunt looks and stooping gait he looks more like your old geography master than a man charged with one of the most difficult jobs in UK retailing.

Such has been the ferocity of criticism of both him and his company and such has been the frenzy of activity at Smith's London head office that he could be forgiven for feeling exhausted, though he will not admit it. "I feel good, full of energy and am keen to get on. It's been an amazing couple of weeks and a steep learning curve."

It has certainly been a baptism of fire. Mr Waterstone launched his surprise restructuring proposals before Mr

Handover had even taken over in the hot seat vacated by Bill Cockburn. And on his third day in the job the WH Smith board made its first basty rebuttal of the Waterstone plan.

Since then Smith's has been a whirlwind of activity, culminating in its decision on Thursday to break itself up with the demerger of the Waterstone's book-selling business and the sale of the music operations including Virgin Or Price. And ever since his appointment he has had to put up with carping that he only got the top job be-

cause Smith's couldn't find anyone else. Not bad for his first 17 days in office.

But he is an amiable man and is taking it well. He can accept the criticism, he says, but the youngest of his three children finds it upsetting. And his 32 years at Smith's, which have included spells running Or Price records and the cash-generative news distribution business, mean loyalty is high on his list of attributes.

He is adamant there has been no U-turn in strategy at Smith's even though he said

himself only last month that "we are not about to break up."

"Barings [Smith's financial advisers] was asked early in the summer to consider a wide range of financial options. But Bill Cockburn's departure put Jeremy Hardie [the WH Smith chairman] in a difficult position. He had to adopt a kind of holding pattern. As a non-executive chairman he couldn't have made an executive decision on something like that until the chief executive position had been filled. It wouldn't have been right."

He says he was committed to the idea of a restructure before he got the chief executive job. "I passionately believe it is the right thing to do and believe I have the complete backing of the board."

But he may not have the full backing of all the shareholders. One said yesterday that Mr Waterstone appeared to have a more convincing vision about how to revitalise the core high street chain and that the Smith plan has several weaknesses. The investor said he would like to know the future of the costly Swindon distribution centre, which Mr Waterstone would close, and the board's plans for the level of gearing.

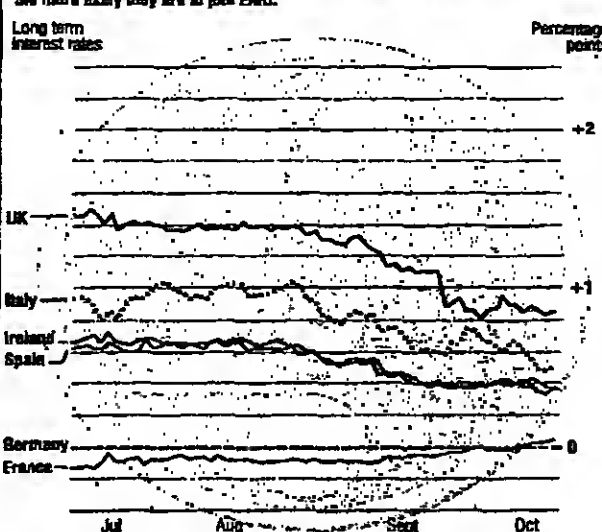
The shareholder added: "One cannot help but feel that they have been bounced into this and that they are reacting to events rather than pursuing a genuine strategy. They say they discussed it in the summer. One is tempted to ask to see the board minutes."

Another said that the position of Mr Hardie was increasingly tenuous given his handling of the search for a new chief executive and the Waterstone approach. "Perhaps he is one of the divestments the board would like to make," he said.

WH Smith will find out how more shareholders, large and small feel about their ideas when they hold their annual meeting next Wednesday.

Who will be in EMU? The financial markets' view

The closer other countries get to the dashed baseline (Germany) the more likely they are to join EMU.



TOWARDS EMU: If the line moves towards the German base line it means investors no longer require such a high premium for holding that country's bonds compared to German ones, because they are confident the currency won't devalue against the mark. In other words, they think that country will be locked into a single currency with Germany in 10 years' time.

AWAY FROM EMU: However, if they think the country won't be in EMU, that it will have higher inflation, and that there is a risk of a future devaluation against the mark, then they will demand an extra premium for holding that country's bonds, so the line will move away from the base.

When will EMU start? The City Analysts' View.

The independent asked analysts from: Nikko Europe, Paine Webber, ABN Amro, JP Morgan, Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, Salomon Brothers, Goldman Sachs, HSBC James Capel, UBS, what probability they placed on EMU starting on time.

Probability EMU starts on time:	83%	(79% last week)
Probability EMU is delayed:	13%	(15% last week)
Probability EMU never happens:	4%	(6% last week)

Bundesbank member's hint fails to dent EMU confidence

Sceptical remarks yesterday by a member of the Bundesbank's ruling council about the small number of countries that should be allowed into a single currency failed to dent the market's growing conviction that it will start on time in 1999.

Reinhold Jochimsen said only those which had been successful in co-ordinating interest rates and keeping inflation down should be included.

He also criticised unnamed German politicians for weakening the strictness of the criteria for joining up — a

statement taken as a hint that Italy should not join.

Alison Cottrell, an economist at Paine Webber, said: "If Helmut Kohl wanted Italy in, it would be difficult for him to have a battle of wills with the Bundesbank."

Italian Communists last week dropped opposition to an austerity budget but Romano Prodi's government was forced to scale down plans to cut pensions and concede a 35-hour working week—putting a question mark over its ability to meet targets for deficit reductions.

IN BRIEF

Ashurst cancels London listing and condemns AIM

Ashurst Technology announced its immediate delisting from the Alternative Investment Market. The move has no effect on the company's listing on the Toronto Stock Exchange or the company's business. Bentoo H Wilcoxon, chairman and chief executive of Ashurst, said: "To the best interest of our shareholders and the company we strongly believe that delisting from AIM was necessary. Compliance and regulatory issues resulting from a dual listing, poor communication between AIM and our nominated adviser, and the overall ineffectiveness of AIM as a liquid trading market for our shares were our principal reasons." He added: "Although the vast majority of our shareholders reside in the UK and Europe, approximately 125,000 shares have traded on AIM during the 12 months, compared with approximately 13.7 million shares on the TSE. Because shares have at times traded at prices as much as two times higher on AIM than the TSE, it is understandable why UK and European investors have turned their backs on AIM."

Cooper predicts pre-tax loss

Frederick Cooper said that, following a reassessment of the group's asset value, it expected full-year results to show a small loss before tax and operating and non-operating exceptional items. The engineering group also announced that Nicholas Keegan would become finance director, replacing John Stait, who has resigned. KPMG, the chartered accountancy firm, will carry out a full strategic review of the group's activities. Results for the year ended 31 July 1997 will be issued following completion of this review.

Grosvenor Inns to sell pubs

Grosvenor Inns is to sell 15 non-core pubs houses to Sirenia for £8.97m, and will dispose of another pub and three wine bars to Chancery for £1.9m. Sirenia is a newly incorporated company established to effect the acquisition of Pubco, 16 public houses and five development sites from Regent Inns and related companies under a related agreement. Grosvenor said the disposals were in line with its strategy to focus solely on the Slug and Lettuce brand. It said there are only four further sales to complete the disposal programme, of which three are currently under contracts for sale. Grosvenor said current sales from the Slug and Lettuce pubs were up by 21.7 per cent, while like-for-like sales were up 9.8 per cent at the end of the first quarter.

£25m deal for ScottishPower

ScottishPower has won a £25m contract to supply electricity to Hyundai's semiconductor plant in Dunfermline. It will meet the plant's electricity needs over three years. In addition, more than £3m worth of electrical engineering work will be carried for Hyundai in a contract won by ScottishPower's electrical contracting business.

Correction

In yesterday's issue, Beverley Hodson was wrongly captioned as finance director of WH Smith. She is in fact retail managing director. Martin Broughton was wrongly captioned as chairman of BAT Industries. He is in fact chief executive.

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 month	Spot	1 month	3 month	Spot	1 month	3 month
UK	100.00			100.00			100.00		
Australia	2.2117	2.2088	2.2082	1.3527	1.3524	1.3524	0.6949	0.6922	0.6927
Canada	2.0145	2.0116	2.0100	1.2478	1.2478	1.2478	0.7900	0.7890	0.7890
Denmark	2.0145	2.0116	2.0100	1.2478	1.2478	1.2478	0.7900	0.7890	0.7890
France	2.0145	2.0116	2.0100	1.2478	1.2478	1.2478	0.7900	0.7890	0.7890
Germany	2.0145	2.0116	2.0100	1.2478	1.2478	1.2478	0.7900	0.7890	0.7890
Italy	2.0145	2.0116	2.0100	1.2478	1.2478	1.2478	0.7900	0.7890	0.7890
Japan	2.0145	2.0116	2.0100	1.2478	1.2478	1.2478	0.7900	0.7890	0.7890
Netherlands	2.0145	2.0116	2.0100	1.2478	1.2478	1.2478	0.7900	0.7890	0.7890
Spain	2.0145	2.0116	2.0100	1.2478	1.2478	1.2478	0.7900	0.7890	0.7890
Sweden	2.0145	2.0116	2.0100	1.2478	1.2478	1.2478	0.7900	0.7890	0.7890
Switzerland	2.0145	2.0116	2.0100	1.2478	1.2478	1.2478	0.7900	0.7890	0.7890
US	2.0145	2.0116	2.0100	1.2478	1.2478	1.2478	0.7900	0.7890	0.7890

Other Spot Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 month	Spot	1 month	3 month
Argentina	18145	18145	18145	0.0825	0.0825	0.0825
Brazil	17378	17378	17378	0.0825	0.0825	0.0825
China	83324	83324	83324	0.0825	0.0825	0.0825
Czech Rep	50.287	50.287	50.287	0.0825	0.0825	0.0825
Egypt	54.777	54.777	54.777	0.0825	0.0825	0.0825
France	39.839	39.839	39.839	0.0825	0.0825	0.0825
Germany	58.264	58.264	58.264	0.0825	0.0825	0.0825
India	58.264	58.264	58.264	0.0825	0.0825	0.0825
Indonesia	58.264	58.264	58.264	0.0825	0.0825	0.0825
Israel	58.264	58.264	58.264	0.0825	0.0825	0.0825
Italy	58.264	58.264	58.264	0.0825	0.0825	0.0825
Japan	58.264	58.264	58.264	0.0825	0.0825	0.0825
UK	58.264	58.264	58.264	0.0825	0.0825	0.0825
US	58.264	58.264	58.264	0.0825	0.0825	0.0825

Interest Rates

Country	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate
UK	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%
France	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%
Germany	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%
Italy	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%
Japan	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%
Netherlands	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%
Spain	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%
Sweden	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%
Switzerland	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%
US	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%

Bond Yields

Country	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate
UK	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%
France	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%
Germany	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%
Italy	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%
Japan	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%
Netherlands	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%
Spain	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%
Sweden	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%
Switzerland	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%
US	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%

Money Market Rates

Country	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate
UK	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%
France	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%
Germany	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%
Italy	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%
Japan	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%
Netherlands	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%
Spain	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%
Sweden	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%
Switzerland	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%
US	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%

Life Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est floor volume	Open interest
Long Call	Dec-97	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long Put	Dec-97	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Short Call	Dec-97	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Short Put	Dec-97	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long Call	Dec-97	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long Put	Dec-97	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Short Call	Dec-97	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Short Put	Dec-97	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long Call	Dec-97	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long Put	Dec-97	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Short Call	Dec-97	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Short Put	Dec-97	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00

Life FTSE 100 Index Option

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est floor volume	Open interest
Long Call	Dec-97	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Long Put	Dec-97	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00

Escape from the maize: how one farmer plans to reap a puzzling harvest



David Legge, a Herefordshire farmer, has created a huge 8ft-high maize maze in one of his fields. The four-acre corn was cut to a design planned on his home computer. Visitors can visit the maize maze at Shortwood Farm, near Pencombe, and if they find the centre they could win a hamper of farm produce. Photograph taken from a very tall ladder by David Rose using an 18mm lens at f11 and 1/250 sec on Fuji 200 ASA film. To order a copy ring 0171-224 2534.

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TIME

TRAVEL, LEISURE & SPORT

Saturday 18 October 1997



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF VIEW

The Guggenheim effect: Bilbao becomes one of the great sights of Europe



Frank Gehry's triumph: the Canadian architect's Guggenheim building breaks the mould of the modern museum as white box

Tonight the King and Queen of Spain will officially open the new Guggenheim gallery in Bilbao – a triumph of bold originality.

Even before it opens, Bilbao's Guggenheim building by the Canadian architect Frank Gehry has had more photo-calls than a supermodel. Not content with taking the world by storm – by breaking out of the modern museum-as-white-box school – Gehry has had the audacity to bring his building to a full stop in a folly: a stone tower that has imploded, fallen apart. Inside, there are 19 galleries, nine of them fairly conventional, rectilinear rooms. The other 10 swoop and soar with roofs like timbered barns.

Two piles of flowers grow outside the main doors, which are currently sealed by security tapes. One is a 40ft-high sculpture of a Yorkshire terrier by the American artist Jeff Koon, with 60,000 pansies puncturing its green, fibrous frame and its own internal watering system causing puddles on the limestone piazza. The other is a mound of Cellophane-wrapped bouquets which mark the spot where on Monday a museum guard was shot dead by ETA, the Basque terrorist movement. The guard had stopped a van driven by three men, who shot him and drove away. Later the police found it

abandoned, filled with gelignite.

Tensions are running high, despite national pride in the project which has catapulted a little known place into the international art world. And the council who, over the past six years, has organised this monument to Basque pride hope to attract 400,000 visitors annually.

During the last decades of the 19th century, the province of Vizcaya and its capital, Bilbao, were industrialised. Franco suppressed the Basque language and stripped the Basque provinces of their autonomy. Its industrial past was as a shipbuilding, min-

ing town ringed with a necklace of green hills – it did not have historically beautiful buildings. Now, as Bilbao faces the post-industrial future, this building stands as testimony to a new civic pride. Crucially, the 14,000 million pesetas it cost came not from the Spanish government but from Basque local taxes and the EU regional fund.

In the long Gallery 104, the Basque history of mining and shipbuilding is epically celebrated: Claes Oldenburg's *Knife Ship* sculpture and Robert Rauschenberg's *Barge*. Rauschenberg, who has a big show on at the Guggenheim in New York, loves Gehry's building. "It is monumental without overwhelming the art."

You probably never thought of going to Bilbao. You will now.

How to get there – page 2

NONIE NIESEWAND
PICTURES BY
DENNIS GILBERT

INSIDE
TODAY

CITY BREAKS
Prague/3

SKIING
Austria/Training/4&5

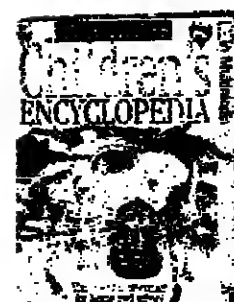
FOOTBALL
Dennis Wise interview/26

TENNIS
Rusedski's rise/17

Now there's an easier way to give your child a world of knowledge



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SIMON CALDER

Bus travel is a form of transport neglected by many, including me – trains and planes are generally much quicker, and these days barely more expensive. But travelling by National Express from Manchester to Carlisle reminded me that it can be fun.

For a start, this is one route where the bus is quicker than the train. The driver – let's call him Bob – ended the safety briefing by saying "There's a hammer for breaking glass, or controlling your children". His colleague Vic served snacks at sub-train buffet prices, and pointed out sights like the "heart of England", a cardiac-shaped grove of trees on a hillside by the M6. Traffic was light, so the promise to phone ahead to make sure connections at Glasgow were held proved unnecessary.

The 135-minute trip was exactly on time and, at £16, cheaper than the train. But it could have cost another 99 pence, had I taken up the offer in Manchester to buy insurance cover.

Every passenger is offered insurance, but what possible use could it be for a journey of just over two hours? (Which I was unlikely to cancel since I bought the ticket five minutes before travelling.) Answers on a bus ticket, please.

When I needed a plane ticket to Mexico City, I chose to travel on KLM via Amsterdam because the Dutch airline offered the cheapest ticket on the day I needed to travel. But for once my "upgrade tie" stayed in the wardrobe.

Here's the theory. An airline will often find itself overbooked in economy, and be obliged to shift some discount travellers into business class. In order not to upset the passengers who've bought premium tickets, the idea is to select vaguely respectable people. Hence the only slightly out-of-fashion tie, which I always carry and don just before checking in.

KLM, though, has put paid to that plan. My ticket, which cost the wrong side of £500, bears the uncompromising, capitalised message "NO UPGRADE".

Why? Perhaps, on a previous trip, I had been spotted skulking about the check-in area trying to look smart. Was my name on a KLM computer under the heading "Warning: Business Class Imposter"? No, says a spokeswoman for the airline.

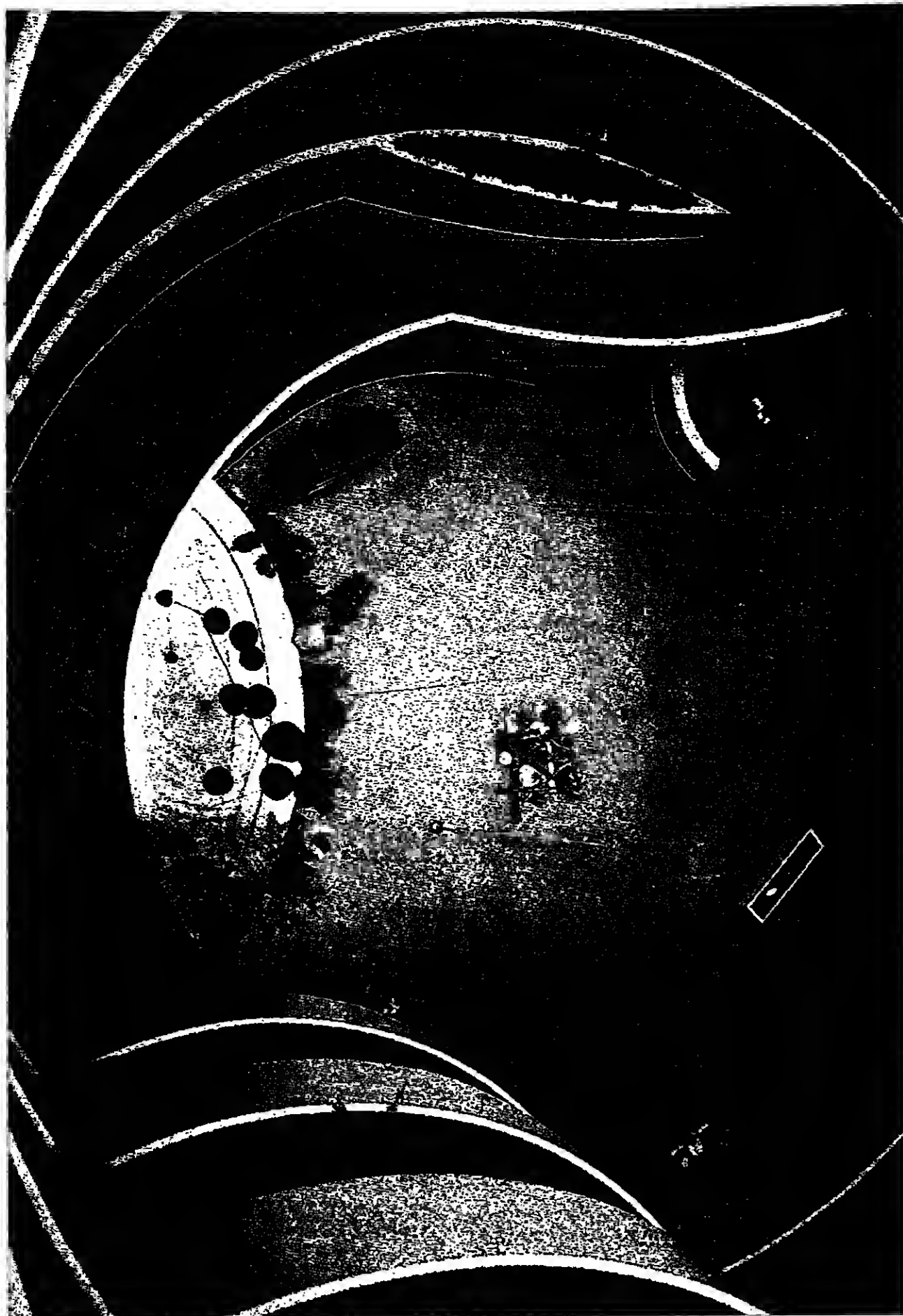
"It's a standard thing on all KLM economy class tickets," she says, "aimed at discouraging passengers from asking for upgrades. KLM has a policy of not upgrading, believing that business-class passengers should get the benefit of any extra space."

An economy class amenity pack awaits anyone who has been upgraded on KLM, if they will share with us all how they did it.

"Do you know," asked my neighbour on a Turkish Airlines flight after we had been immobile on the apron at Istanbul airport for two hours, "why they call the airline THY?"

It was the low point of a truly dismal journey. The outward leg had been tiresome enough; when I enquired why the flight was an hour late, the response was "Because it's Friday". Going home, no one seemed to know why the plane was so late (it being Wednesday, the Friday explanation was no longer valid).

The correct answer to my neighbour's question is Turk Hava Yollari, the vernacular for Turkish Airlines. But his answer was funnier: "They hate you."



Woody Allen described the Guggenheim as 'a giant lavatory basin'

Photograph: Michael Yamashita/Colorific

Art meets life on an upward spiral

The Guggenheim Museum is just one of four world-class galleries in New York's swanky Upper East Side. Hamish Mykura says it's the people, more than the art, that make it memorable.

"My optimistic zigzag", was architect Frank Lloyd Wright's phrase for his big, white, wonky concrete spiral of an art gallery when it opened on 5th Avenue in 1959. The sleek and opinionated residents of the Upper East Side have been less kind to it over the years. Woody Allen called it "a giant lavatory basin" and Jackie Onassis hated it to the last.

But it's still the New York gallery where you're most likely to see Woody Allen, and Alastair Cooke is a near neighbour. On its site facing Central Park, the swirling cartoon of a building mocks the heavy Victorian apartment blocks that stretch away to either side of it. The stretch of Fifth Avenue that runs south from the Guggenheim at 89th Street along the edge of Central Park is the prime location for two of New York's most popular and rewarding pastimes: looking at art, and looking at people.

The Guggenheim has three big competitors on the Upper East Side: the Whitney, the Frick and the Metropolitan Museum. The walk between them passes the homes of the most well-heeled and aspirational New Yorkers. Watching the complicated rituals that govern their overstuffed days is a fascinating pastime.

The Guggenheim is the most acutely fashionable of the four galleries. Visitors are squeezed through the entrance beneath a heavy concrete beam to emerge into the breathtaking central atrium, where the sweeping spiral ramp of the gallery winds in widening loops to the high skylights above. Here, socialites and tourists rub shoulders. Spotted in the shop – a midwestern tourist holding a print of Marc Chagall's *Green Violinist*, asking "Do you have this in yellow?"

Meanwhile the little restaurant below the gallery is, on weekdays, an ideal spotting ground for the rich: thin, manicured ladies-who-lunch, the "social X-rays" Tom Wolfe described in *Bonfire of the Vanities*. A pleasant afternoon can be spent listening to the loud exchange of confidences about boyfriends, graded according to value of jewellery received, while watching them push a piece of lettuce and a sliver of goat's cheese around their plates.

The ramp is the truly great feature of the gallery. Thronged with visitors, it spirals upward for a quarter of a mile to form the main rotunda. Children love it, and harassed Saturday dads struggle to control their hyperactive six-year-olds. At the top of the ramp the edge wall gets alarmingly low. Stepping back

to admire a picture, a glance over your shoulder can induce head-swimming vertigo.

There are three best times to visit the Upper East Side. Stroll in the park about 7am, well before the gallery opens, when the east side of the park comes alive as a wave of single young professionals emerge from their tiny, expensive apartments with their tiny, expensive dogs for the first big chat-up opportunity of the day. The dogs are the catalyst for get-to-know-you doggy talk – isn't he *cute*? – and there are brisk arrangements to meet again tomorrow. Four o'clock on weekdays is another fine spectacle. At the park entrance near 68th Street, clusters of Filipina nannies kitted out by their employers in Victorian-style starched black-and-white uniforms rock babies in top-of-the-range prams. The mothers and fathers, meanwhile, are just two thirds of the way through their stressed, Wall Street days. On Saturday afternoons the Guggenheim museum is a central part of the City's Sunday improve-yourself ritual of morning workout, brunch, art gallery, dinner, movie. And the place swarms.

Each of the other galleries attracts a crowd to match the art on display. The Whitney Museum of American art has heavy concrete, serious exhibitions and visitors wearing hats, black polo-cocks and earnest frowns. The huge Metropolitan Museum of art, sprawling into Central Park with three and a half million artworks, is so popular at weekends it becomes a sort of over-run art theme park. The Frick collection was the art-packed mansion of a union-hustling coal baron, Henry Clay Frick. It still has the furniture and courtyards and playing fountains, and curiously is rarely visited by New Yorkers. With its crowd of international visitors it's hard to believe that the grinding traffic of Fifth Avenue is just a few feet away on the other side of the wall.

But the Guggenheim remains the most dazzling of the Upper East Side galleries, if not always the best place to see pictures. Works displayed here struggle to compete with the marvellous distraction of the building that houses them. In 1992, when the museum reopened after extensive renovation and the building of a new extension, it was relaunched with an exhibition by Dan Flavin, who specialises in illuminating works of architecture. Freshly painted and washed with Flavin's pastel neon, critics again acclaimed the central rotunda as an artwork to rival the works that hang in it. The crowds that throng the spiral gallery can be more interesting still.

The Guggenheim Museum (001 212 423 3500) is on Fifth Avenue at 89th Street. It opens daily except Thursday, from 10am to 6pm Sunday-Wednesday, 10am-8pm Friday and Saturday. Admission \$15; on Fridays from 6-8pm, you pay what you wish.

BILBAO BOUND

Where is Bilbao? In 13th place in the Spanish football league, of course. That's the problem afflicting dozens of Continental cities: to a lot of British people, they are of interest only as potential opponents for our boys in European soccer competitions.

Suddenly, though, the new Guggenheim has promoted Bilbao from the lower divisions of touristic attraction to Europe's premier league of weekend breaks. Demand for travel to the Basque city is rocketing. Short-break operators compare the level of interest created by the new collection to that generated by a big exhibition such as Van Gogh in Amsterdam or Matisse in Paris.

To visit Bilbao this week for her report, Nonie Niesewand was obliged to pay £430 for a return flight from

Gatwick to Bilbao on British Airways (0345 222111). Lower fares are available on some flights. The Spanish airline Iberia (0171-630 0011) has a special of £173 for its evening flight from Heathrow. For £312, Kiker Holidays (0171-231 3333) is offering two nights in a four-star hotel, including flights on Iberia, airport transfers and admission to the Guggenheim.

Flights take two hours: the boat takes a day and a half to steam from Portsmouth through the Bay of Biscay to Santurtzi, eight miles north of Bilbao. P&O Ferries (0990 980980) makes the voyage twice a week. A mini-cruise, which will allow you five hours ashore – barely time to see the Guggenheim – costs £59; a five-day return for two people plus a car costs £315.

To make the most of the region, combine a trip to Bilbao with the rest of the Basque lands. Motorways blast a course along the coastline east and west of Bilbao, but a much more entertaining way to travel is on one of Spain's great narrow-gauge railways. In about four hours, you can wobble along the Basque Railway link to San Sebastian. The line is temporarily disconnected in the middle, though a bus connection covers the gap.

While Bilbao possesses only an apology for a seafront, its rival curls itself around a magnificent bay. Bilbao might have got the Guggenheim, but San Sebastian has the looks. Make sure you visit both cities: as Solomon R Guggenheim never said, "Away goals count double".

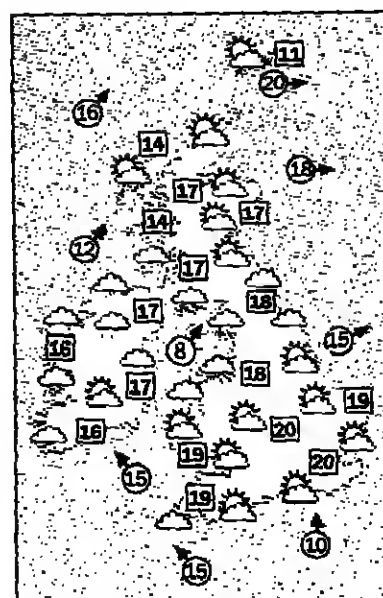
Simon Calder

WEATHER

The British Isles

General summary and outlook

Most parts of the UK will have a dry and rather warm day. Over England and Wales banks of mist, fog, and low cloud during the morning will gradually lift, and most places should have a fine afternoon with long spells of hazy sunshine, but a few spots in the Midlands and eastern England may stay misty into the afternoon. Scotland and Northern Ireland will have variable cloud and bright periods, with patchy light rain in southern Scotland slowly dying away. Tomorrow, most of the UK will be dry and warm with some hazy sunshine after the gradual clearance of morning fog and low cloud, but some places could stay misty all day. During Monday and Tuesday the northern half of Britain will turn colder but should stay dry, whereas the southern half of the country will become less settled with a growing threat of rain. It will be colder in southern districts as well by mid-week.

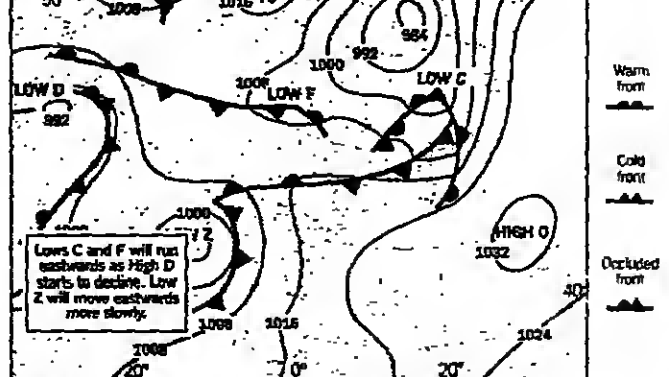


City	Temp	Cloud
Aberdeen	11-15	1-2
Angus	11-15	1-2
Armagh	11-15	1-2
Belfast	11-15	1-2
Birmingham	11-15	1-2
Blackpool	11-15	1-2
Bournemouth	11-15	1-2
Bristol	11-15	1-2
Cardiff	11-15	1-2
Carlisle	11-15	1-2
Chesham	11-15	1-2
Colchester	11-15	1-2
Cork	11-15	1-2
Dublin	11-15	1-2
Edinburgh	11-15	1-2
Exeter	11-15	1-2
Glasgow	11-15	1-2
Guernsey	11-15	1-2
Harrogate	11-15	1-2
Isle of Man	11-15	1-2
Leeds	11-15	1-2
London	11-15	1-2
Liverpool	11-15	1-2
Lisbon	11-15	1-2
Manchester	11-15	1-2
Newcastle	11-15	1-2
Nottingham	11-15	1-2
Oxford	11-15	1-2
Perth	11-15	1-2
Reading	11-15	1-2
Sheffield	11-15	1-2
Southampton	11-15	1-2
Stirling	11-15	1-2
Stroud	11-15	1-2
Torquay	11-15	1-2
Warrington	11-15	1-2
Widnes	11-15	1-2
Worcester	11-15	1-2
York	11-15	1-2

City	Temp	Cloud
London	11-15	1-2
Birmingham	11-15	1-2
Manchester	11-15	1-2
Newcastle	11-15	1-2
Glasgow	11-15	1-2
Belfast	11-15	1-2

City	Temp	Cloud
London	11-15	1-2
Birmingham	11-15	1-2
Manchester	11-15	1-2
Newcastle	11-15	1-2
Glasgow	11-15	1-2
Belfast	11-15	1-2

Europe and the world



City	Temp	Cloud
London	11-15	1-2
Birmingham	11-15	1-2
Manchester	11-15	1-2
Newcastle	11-15	1-2
Glasgow	11-15	1-2
Belfast	11-15	1-2

AA Roadwatch

London A11 Laydown: Lane closures A12 roadblock until August 1999
London A306 Hammersmith Bridge Closed until January 1998
Surrey M25 J10-11 Lane closures both ways until further notice
Sussex A24 J18-19 Congestion on A24 roadblock until August 1999
Suffolk A140 J10-11 Congestion on A140 roadblock until August 1999
West Midlands A100 J10-11 Congestion on A100 roadblock until August 1999
Worcestershire A41 Congestion on A41 roadblock until August 1999
Yorkshire A166 Congestion on A166 roadblock until August 1999

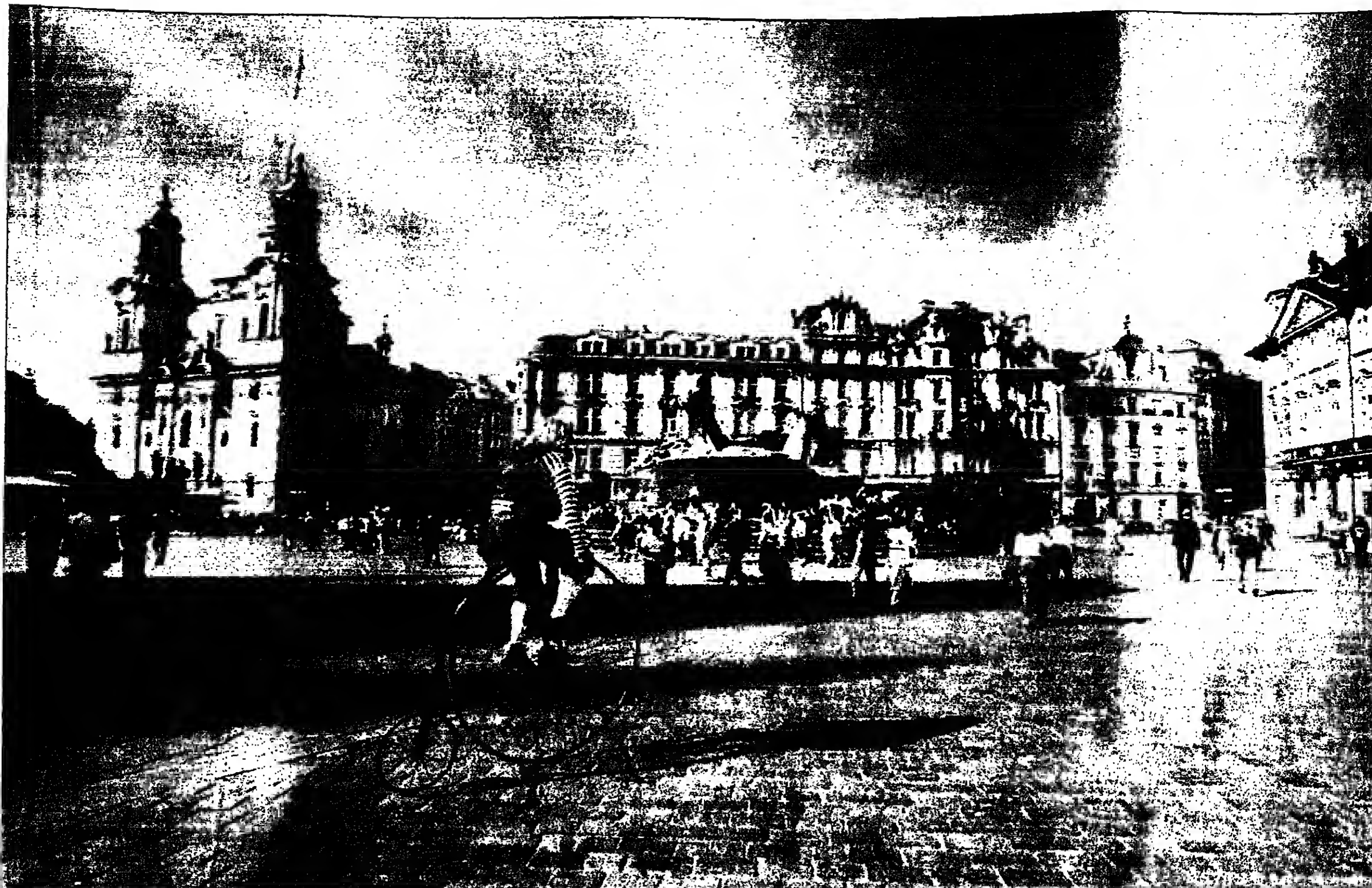
The sky at night



The Orionid meteor shower radiates from a point on the Orion/Gemini border. This chart shows the position of the Moon and the horizon at 3 a.m. on Tuesday 21 October.

Anyone out and about after midnight and before dawn in the next few days has a chance of spotting meteors from the Orionid shower. The peak day for the shower is Tuesday (21st), and the most likely time to see a handful of meteors is just before dawn, when the radiant is well up in the sky. Unfortunately, the waning gibbous Moon has conspired against meteor spotters. In the moonlit sky, only the brighter shooting star trails will be apparent. However, shower meteors can streak across a very wide area of sky even though their tracks will all seem to radiate from a spot on the border between Orion and Gemini. The bits of cosmic debris responsible for this shower have been scattered through space by Halley's comet, which is at present far too remote to be visible – somewhere between Uranus and Neptune.

Jacqueline Mitton



It's hard to attract attention in Prague's Old Town, where you're surrounded by some of Europe's most beautiful architecture

Photograph: Mark Pain

48 hours in the life of ... Prague

If you're in search of a short cut to the soul of a city, follow Dominic O'Reilly's itinerary for a two-day break in the Czech capital.

Why go now?

Because Prague autumn, while not quite offering the cultural delights of Prague spring, is a better bet than Prague winter – a prescription for bronchial problems. The brown coal heating system used in the city produces a smog of South East Asian proportions. So go now while some of Europe's most beautiful architecture is still visible.

Beam down

Czech Airlines (0171-255 1366) has a fare of £205 (including tax) return from Stansted or Heathrow. British Airways (0345 222111) flies daily from Heathrow, with a World Offer of £237. Ruzyně airport is north-west of the capital. The minibus into the city centre takes 20 minutes and costs 90 crowns (£1.80).

Get your bearings

The minibus will drop you at Namesti Republiky (Republic Square) on the eastern edge of the Old Town. It is part of the Golden Triangle of streets that make up the shopping district. Down the road is Wenceslas Square, site of the 1989 Velvet Revolution and home to numerous tourist information offices, and Old Town Square.

Check in

The Hotel Axa (00 420 2 2481 2580) on Na Porici, a five-minute walk east of Republic Square has double rooms with breakfast for £58; it also has a fitness centre and pool.

U Medvídku, just around the corner from the National Theatre and the river at 7 Na Perstýně, (00 420 2 2421 1916) translates as At the Little Bears. It is a Budvar inn with great beer and good Czech cuisine. Double rooms with breakfast cost £25 a night, singles £18.

The Hotel Forum at 1 Kongresova (just by Vysehrad metro station) has a weekend special rate of £80, single or double; book through Inter-Continental reservations on 0345 581444.

Take a hike

Stroll into Old Town Square shortly before the hour to take up a good position in front of the Astronomical Clock. It chimes out a medieval morality tale with skeletons and bell ringers. Walk up towards the Charles Bridge and count the seven spans. (The statues are actually copies.) From there, stroll up the hill and through the narrow lanes that were once symbolic of old Prague but are now full of souvenir shops, until you reach the Castle.

Actually, it is more of a stately home than a fortress but there are wonderful gardens, an impressive cathedral and the bones of Good King Wenceslas. Again, on the hour, there is the changing of the guard – but don't expect it to be done with the smoothness of the British. Dropped rifles and sniggers are commonplace amongst the conscripts dressed in the elaborate red-and-blue uniforms designed by a theatre friend of President Vaclav Havel.

Take a ride

Pick up tram 18 at Karlovo Namesti (Charles Square) and ride down Narodni trida by the National Theatre, and along the Smetana Embankment by the river – the best view of the Charles Bridge and the Castle. The tram then crosses the river and runs up near the Castle. Beware of pickpockets; this route is a favourite haunt.

Lunch on the run

Saffir Grill, off Wenceslas Square at 12 Havelska Street, is a Lebanese eatery that offers good falafel and such delights – far better than the dubious sausages sold in street kiosks.

Cultural afternoon

See how the capital developed at the Museum of the City of Prague, 52 Na Porici (nearest metro Florenc). Open 9am-6pm daily except Monday. Admission, about 50p. Right now, the main exhibition is Prague motifs in the work of painter Miloslav Holy. Take a look and then see the subjects for real as you walk round. Or take a leaflet promoting classical music in the churches of Old Town. Or ask for tickets at the National Theatre on Narodni – opera, ballet or music. It doesn't matter. The decor is the most important part.

An aperitif

Stroll along Wenceslas Square in number 21, ignore the shop underneath and take the escalator to the sixth floor. In the Fromin cafe/bar and restaurant, you will have a wonderful view of the city and an even better one of its new middle classes. A great place for people watching and worth staying on for dinner, too. If you go now, you may catch the last drops of burcak, a white wine. It is like Beaujolais nouveau in that it is a young wine but tastes much better.

For a more Czech way of doing it, wander into any bar and order a "pivo". The Czechs drink more beer than anyone else in the world and a couple of sips will show you why. This time of year, a Pardubice Porter provides excellent insulation against a cold wind.

Dinner

A couple of years ago, Prague offered a selection of large chunks of red meat and little else. Now there is every type of cuisine imaginable.

For a romantic, and excellent, international meal try Kampa Park at the edge of the Charles Bridge on the Castle side. The seafood is best. An outside table gives a great view of the illuminated bridge. Afterwards, walk up to the castle for the best night-time view of the city.

Sunday morning: go to church

St Vitus's cathedral in the castle offers services at about 9am on Sunday but, for something slightly more elaborate, try the Orthodox Cathedral of Saints Cyril and Methodius on Reslova Street, by Karlovo Namesti metro station. Aside from its historic opulence, there is the curiosity of services in Czech, Greek, English and Old Slavonic. More information on service time in *The Prague Post*.

Bracing brunch

The Obecní dum (Municipal House) on Na Prikope in the Old Town has just re-opened after three years of renovations. Now in all its Art Deco glory, it has a splendid French cafe.

A walk in the park

Ride the Metro's red line to Nadrazi Holesovice, its northernmost station. There are signs for Vystaviste, the exhibition ground built for an emperor's jubilee. If there's not a funfair on, there's bound to be a market. From there follow the signs for Troja Island; summer sees show jumping in the grounds of a chateau, in winter stroll around the gardens and the zoo.

The souvenir

Czechs are skilled makers and manipulators of marionettes. The Sunday market in Old Town Square is the place to witness the widest choice. Or see the experts do it at the Puppet Theatre; students hand out leaflets in Old Town Square listing performance times.

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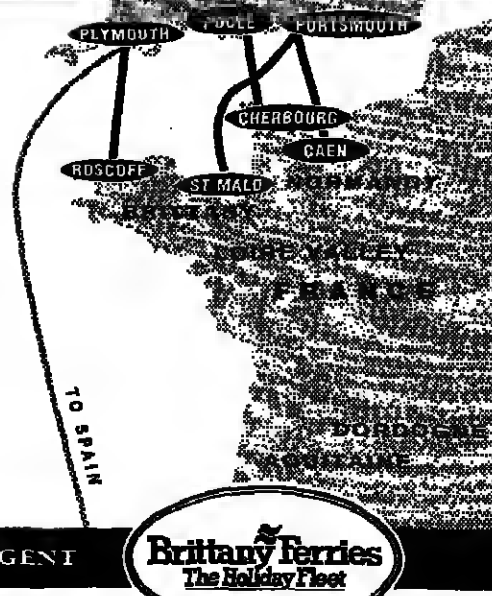
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4/SKIING

High season, low tech

You don't need such hi-tech facilities as lifts and cable cars to go skiing - with the right equipment you can simply clamber up the mountains. Richard Hildridge goes touring at the tiny Austrian resort of Kuhtai.

It was the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I, no less, who put the tiny Austrian resort of Kuhtai on the map in the 15th century. He used to bring his entourage up the pass to take pot shots at the chamois which nibbled along the mountain crags.

There are still chamois shyly lurking above the pass, but the pride of place as far as animals are concerned is taken by a cow. It stands peacefully in the main street. Well, the only street, actually. It's stuffed. It's on wheels and it seemed wholly appropriate to a resort which, by the middle of April, radiated a gentle, slightly tired, *fin de saison* calm. The few package holiday-makers had gone, a gaggle of enthusiasts had driven up from Innsbruck attracted by the sun, the late, lingering snow and the freedom from lift queues.

Why did I end up here and not in one of the bigger, higher, altogether more glamorous resorts? The luxury of Lech, the rakish appeal of Kitzbühel, the sophistication of St Anton.

Kuhtai has only seven lifts and fewer than 20 places to stay. Straddling a mountain pass, it is only 45 minutes from Innsbruck airport (the return journey took only 35 minutes because the minibus driver was late for another fare) and we had decided to go touring - clambering up mountains on skis. The joy of that is that it doesn't matter how big the resort is, or how many lifts there are. All you need are mountains and proper gear.

The equipment of these days makes going uphill a breeze. The skis are shorter than

downhill skis and have a binding which adjusts to let your heel rise and fall as you trudge up. The steeper the climb the higher you adjust the heel rest so that the movement between foot and leg is kept to a minimum. Above all, the seal skins which attach to the underneath of the ski grip the mountain side with the tenacity of a limpet. If the skis are kept flat it is virtually impossible to slip back.

A gaggle of chattering housewives swept uphill past me as if they were going to the

shops. They even had enough breath left to wish me "Grüss Gott", and waved cheerily as they bounded back down the mountain in time for Sunday lunch.

You get very hot going up, but even in April it is very cold at the top. The wind whips round your woolies and freezes your hands as you fumble in the rucksack for emergency rations of chocolate and slivovitz.

The point of going up is the coming down. We take off the skins, carry our skis

around an outcrop and swoop down a virgin slope with a surface as lumpy as an alligator's skin. Round another corner and we are whizzing over corrugated traverses, then into soft snow and finally we are forced to take off our skis for a stumble through the shrubs and little streams.

We pause for breath in the valley. The sound of silence is broken only by the cawing of a crow. One purple crocus is bravely showing through the newly revealed, bedraggled grass.

We were ready for more adventures until a blizzard broke that evening. The little community shuddered in the blast. The stuffed cow was blown over. We huddled in the lee of the buildings as we searched for a little light night life.

We awoke to find fresh snow and brilliant sunshine. Touring? On a day like this? Probably not - missing the point in our eagerness to be on the slopes, that a climb into the empty distance would have been a spectacular experience. Anyway our

Far from the maddening crowds touring mixes uphill with downhill and keeps the hordes in your wake.

guide for the day looked as if he too had discovered the village's night life. Indeed it looked as if he had been the night life.

There was no way we could miss out on a sunny day with new snow. Exit touring, enter the untrammelled delights of skiing off piste. It doesn't matter how good you are. The joy is skiing on untouched domain, trekking across to a valley or bowl which you have gazed longingly at from the chair lift and finding yourself floundering happily through unskied snow.

It feels like an adventure, you can't hear the racket of the lifts or the shouts of the skiers. And there is a fantastic sense of achievement when you reach the bottom - one way or another - red-faced with exertion and look back up the hill at the tracks left in the snow. And the great splodge where you fell over.

Sitting in the restaurant wolfing down great mounds of ribs and sauerkraut and gallons of red wine, you can afford yourself the little glow of self-satisfaction which comes with the knowledge that, not only have you been on top, but you've been where no man has been before. That morning, anyway.

There are no longer any scheduled flights to Innsbruck from the UK. Air UK (0345 666777), which used to fly the route from Stansted, now offers connections from a range of British airports via Amsterdam.

Swissair and Tyrolean Airways (0171-434 7300) can get you from Heathrow to Innsbruck via Zurich for £224 return, including tax. Or fly from Gatwick to Salzburg on Lufthansa (0171-630 5924) for £202. From Salzburg rent a car (driving time is two and a half hours) or take a train from Salzburg to Innsbruck (two hours) and then a bus.

Few operators feature packages to Kuhtai; two that do are Inghams (0181-780 4444) and Alpine Tours (01227 454177).

Austrian Tourist Board: 0171-629 1461.

Eurostar Paris hotel break from just £85

Driveline

The Independent and Independent on Sunday, in association with Driveline Europe have arranged a special Autumn break in Paris offer. This special break is available to you from as little as £85pp and you have a choice of five 2** hotels in which to stay. Simply call Driveline to make your reservation on 01707 222400.

The offer is valid for travel between 24th Oct and 14th Dec 1997, and between 8th Jan and 12th Feb 1998.

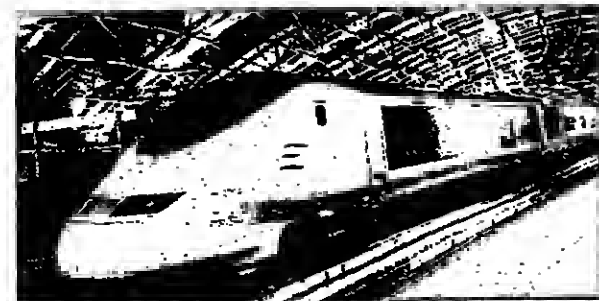
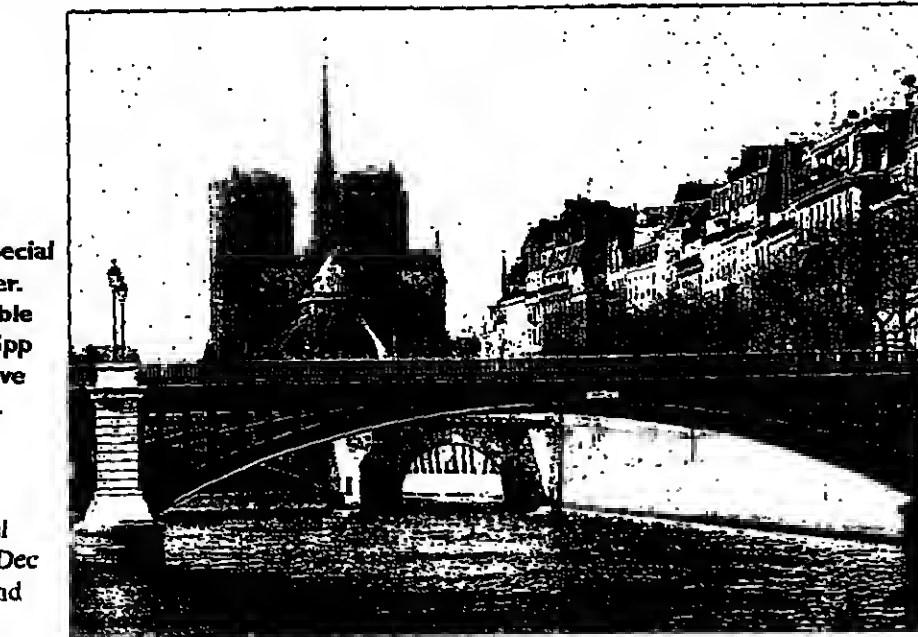
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The break includes a return standard class Eurostar ticket from London Waterloo (or Ashford International, Kent) to Paris Gare du Nord and one night sharing a twin/double room at one of five conveniently located 2** hotels. For only £20 per person per night you can extend your stay to a two or three night break. You can upgrade to a 3** hotel from just £105pp. Extra nights are just £40pp, per night.

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(* stops at Ashford, Kent). Parking at Ashford is just £5 per day. Times above refer to Mon/Fri, fewer services run Sat/Sun.

Terms and conditions as previously published

GREEN CHANNEL

Toilet stories are always popular with travellers and the British media, so when the route to Everest became known as the "Kleener Trail" in the Eighties because of all the toilet paper left behind by trekkers, the story struck a crude chord in the public imagination.

In fact, toilet tissue was but one of the Himalayas' many problems. Along with the 300,000-plus tourists visiting Nepal annually - a quarter of whom go trekking - come sewage-polluted rivers, mini mountains of non-biodegradable rubbish, deforestation, erosion and landslides. A group of 12 trekkers will use as much fuel in one day as would keep a Nepalese family warm and fed for 10 days.

Such bad publicity has done some good however. The Himalayan Tourist Code was drawn up in 1990 - a collaborative effort between tour operators in the UK and Nepal and environmentalists, co-ordinated by the British pressure group Tourism Concern. The code suggests burning or burying waste, carrying out non-biodegradable litter, not making open fires, and staying in lodges where kerosene stoves are used.

"The Nepalese have tried very hard to clean up trails and now you see little evidence of rubbish," says Angela Kalisch, trek leader with the British tour operator, High Places. "Operators do implement the code and there are

Nepalese environmental projects like the Annapurna Conservation Area Project which are exemplary."

The British Mountaineering Council is now drafting a broader code and guidelines for trekkers, mountaineers and expedition operators. "One of the main things tourists can do is ask questions of their operators - for instance how waste is dealt with," says the Council. "The longer the explanation you get the better."

Sue Wheat

For the British Mountaineering Council advice sheet, call 0161-445 4747; for a copy of the Himalayan Tourist Code call Tourism Concern on 0171-753 3330.

RED CHANNEL

A compendium of hazards facing the traveller. This week's warnings about the Indian sub-continent from the Foreign Office (0171-238 4503).

Sri Lanka: On 15 October, a bomb left in a truck exploded next to a hotel in central Colombo, killing at least 16 people and wounding over 150. This is the first serious incident in Colombo for 15 months. Further incidents cannot be ruled out. Visitors should minimise the time they spend in the city.

Fighting between the security forces and the Tamil Tigers (LTTE) continues in the north and east of the country. The south and centre of the island, including all the main tourists areas and the Cultural Triangle, remain unaffected. But there have been incidents in the Yala National Park.

Bangladesh: The political situation is tense. Riots, demonstrations and strikes have taken place nationwide and are likely to continue. There may be

occasional outbreaks of violence. Visitors should avoid political gatherings and other crowded areas.

Poor driving, vehicle maintenance and unlit or poorly lit buses and lorries are the cause of frequently subject to night-time armed banditry. Passenger trains and long-distance buses are sometimes targeted by organised gangs of thieves. Avoid travel after dark. New arrivals should register with the High Commission in Dhaka; telephone 882705.

DESTINATION KILIMANJARO

Gateway to the Great Game Parks of Africa

Later this year we shall be operating the first non-scheduled flight service from London Gatwick to Kilimanjaro - the gateway to the great game parks of Africa. The service, in being direct, presents the traveller with a convenient means of witnessing the wildlife wonders of the great parks at a remarkably low price that represents a saving of many hundreds of pounds from the tariffs normally available and without the tedium of routing via other countries.

Should you have always wanted to visit these wonderful locations but have been dissuaded by the high cost, then this is an opportunity that should not be missed. As we are initially limiting the available places to just 20 per departure it is essential that early telephone reservations are made to avoid disappointment.

Itinerary in Brief

Fly by Monarch Airlines Boeing 757 via Luair to Kilimanjaro airport 30 miles from Arusha. The gateway to the great game parks such as the Serengeti, Manara, Arusha, Tarangire and the Ngorongoro Crater. Our hotel is the Mt Meru Novotel at the foot of Mt Meru situated in 15 acres of lush gardens. The 100 guestrooms and suites come with full facilities and air-conditioning. The hotel is under European management and boasts three restaurants, a number of bars and a lounge.

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Dec 23 - £445. Dec 30 - £415
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Single room supplement £195

Zanzibar - it is possible to extend your stay with a 7-night stay on the beautiful island of Zanzibar. Supplement from £295 per person (single £795).

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What a carve-up: video star Martin Bell cuts a figure

Carving's not for turkeys

If you're hoping to cut it on the slopes this season, says Stephen Wood, it's time to turn on the TV and get up to speed.

Last season, you could get away with it. Carving skis were the new thing, and the admission that you had never carved a turn would provoke sympathy rather than disdain. But this season they have become the *only* thing: look around the equipment shops and you will struggle to find a ski that does not have the characteristic broad tip and tail and the narrow "hourglass" waist beneath the binding. Alongside the racks of skis are "carving" boots, and, since anything that doesn't carve just won't cut it now, there is "carving" skiwear, too.

Face it: you want to be on carving skis this season. Even if you rent rather than buy they are the obvious choice, because all the new stock in hire shops will be carving skis (and any traditional pair will have at least a season's wear on them). But how can you get up to speed with the technique for using them? Well, the equipment shops have another product for you: most will stock at least one of this season's three new videos on carving technique, all priced between £14 and £15. I have watched them all, and at least one is worth buying.

The principle of carving skis is very simple. The wide tip and tail dig into the snow when you put the ski on its edge and apply pressure through your boot to make a turn; at the same time the waist - which is narrower, and therefore more flexible - will bend. And because it is cut inwards at either side of the waist, the middle section of the ski's edge can move outwards before it comes into contact with the snow.

Since all these videos are full

of "helpful" analogies, let me offer one of my own. Say you placed a wooden ruler on its edge on your desk, canted it away from you at an angle of about 45 degrees to the desk-top, and then tried to push the middle to bend it. You would not succeed, because the edge would be in contact with the desk along the ruler's whole length. But the middle part of a "waisted" ruler could be pushed, until that part was touching the desk. It would bend... just as a carving ski bends. When it does so, the ski presents a curved edge to the

hour, about 20 minutes longer than the other two - but that's because, apart from the re-runs of clips from earlier *Ski Tips*, so much time is spent featuring the products of its sponsors. Drawing a comparison between carving skis and a car's power steering may not be very helpful, but at least it justifies footage of the four-wheel drive vehicle provided by one sponsor. (Unfortunately for a ferry line, one of the other 13 sponsoring companies, the producer failed to find a parallel between carving skis and cross-channel ferries.)

and deals almost exclusively with body angles, the key to carved turns. As Britain's most successful Olympic skier, Bell also has the skill to demonstrate beautifully the correct application of carving techniques - and, vividly, what happens if they are applied incorrectly. The sponsors' names (apart from the ski manufacturer's logo, which has a cameo role) appear only in the credits; and the production values make it look - unusually in this company - more like a TV programme than a home video.

But even Martin Bell is stretched to fill a 40-minute video with the basics of carving technique. By the end he loses the pint, wandering into an equipment shop, visiting the gym, and doing some grass-skiing before a snow-ball fight finale - almost as embarrassing as the "dinner party" at the end of *Ski Tips 5*, in which the presenter roasts the hotel that has provided board and lodging for himself and his crew.

It's a pity that, as well as all the fillers and advertisements that are featured, none of these videos spared a couple of minutes to explain what a carving ski actually does. Still, you don't have to buy a video to understand that. You've got a ruler, haven't you?

'Carving Skills with Martin Bell', £14.99 from Paul Paley Productions (0171-229 7713).

'Ski Tips 5', £13.99 from Maverik Productions (01273 325260).
'The Ultimate Learning Experience 2', £14.99 from Ski S&S (01442 266449).

Face it: you want to be on carving skis this season... they are the obvious choice

But set amongst all the product placement, the video does include some useful stuff on carving technique. It makes the point that, contrary to popular belief, basic skiing skills such as snowploughing and sliding turns are applicable to carving skis. And it lays the right emphasis on angulation - although I am not convinced that holding a three-legged stool against the buttocks while making a turn (as the presenter does in one sequence) is an instructive way to improve anyone's body angle.

Much the best of the three videos is *Carving Skills with Martin Bell*. The commentary, written by Bell himself, is confident and clear (he talks about skiing, not power steering or diving).

snow, so that - as all the videos say - it "makes the turn for you".

The ruler analogy may be difficult to grasp, but it's better than nothing - which is what you get from the three videos. Although they deal with a new skiing technology, none of them bothers to explain how it works. *The Ultimate Learning Experience 2*, a "definitive guide to carving", opens with the bold claim that it will provide "a comprehensive run-down on exactly what carving skis are, and which are the right ones for you".

It does neither. Nor does it deal properly with "angulation", an essential part of carving technique because it is what enables the skier to put pressure on the skis. Instead, the video stresses skills (such as "pole plant positioning") which are marginal to carving, and pursues analogies which range from the obscure (goalkeeping, diving) to the misleading (motorcycling).

At least the analogies in *Ski Tips 5: Carving Skis* are more transparent. This video lasts an

A midnight tryst with a voodoo witch

In the final part of his voyage up the Mississippi, Matthew Broke slips into New Orleans's twilight zone.

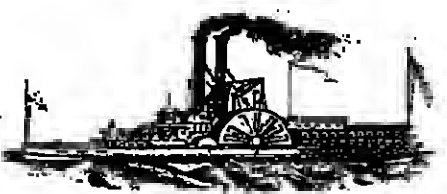
I hid in the darkness of the back seat of a taxicab creeping through the streets of New Orleans at midnight. Outside, on the corner of Bourbon and Conti, the faces of the drunk and the stoned gazed at me through the open window. Their sweaty cheeks reflected the red and green neon of the French Quarter strip bars and the crawfish diners. A big-legged woman humped against the cab door and shuffled off down the street. I watched her denim hotpants struggling to contain her buttocks as she walked. Someone dressed as an alligator was trying to coax me out of the cab and into a Cajun music bar by waving a reptilian hand at me. The zydeco sounded foot-tappingly good but I had a date. We lurched on, picking up speed as we left the decadence behind. A hot, wet wind blew on my face through the window and lifted the strands of my hair that had matted and stuck to my forehead.

The cab dropped me on North Rampart Street, the frayed hem of the French Quarter's skirts. I found an iron gate protecting the Voodoo Spiritual Temple and waited for my priestess, wondering if I had pushed my luck a little far by arranging to meet her at the witching hour.

Miriam Chamani is the Queen Mother and founder of the temple. She has been

here since 1990 when she arrived penniless but "full of the spirit" with her husband, a Belizean "obeahman" or herbal healer. She did not come with the intention of establishing a temple but knew she was destined to do religious work of some sort. Now she is the Witch Queen of New Orleans and divides her time between sacrificing things and showing tourists around the temple.

Miriam's assistant led me to a courtyard where I sat under three Christmas oaks. Miriam walked silently across the flagstones, past me and into the temple's ante-room. She was rubbing her eyes and clearly had been sleeping. I felt guilty for interviewing her at this hour. She said she



didn't mind and with the casual air of a dinner party host handing round sherry and pretzels she brought out a foot-high candle and a frying-pan full of fizzing, smoking incense.

Engulfed in the sweet smoke I tried to draw from her the secret of voodoo. Either the incense, the late hour or the crushing fatigue that I had built up over the past five

weeks travelling non-stop down 2,500 miles of the Mississippi prevented my brain from computing her explanations. I just about grasped her thoughts on the circularity of things (good and evil, light and dark, etc, etc) and I agreed with her beliefs about the afterlife - that our ancestors' spirits are all around us. I had hoped she would tell me that was true. But the higher realms of "gris-gris" as they call voodoo in New Orleans, sailed over my head and up into the lower branches of the oaks. I was baffled by the Versatile Order of Divinity and the Invisible Science of Life.

Miriam took me in to see the temple. In two small rooms lit only by candles were altars covered with offerings to ancestors and to the Gods. Half-full cups of black coffee, their residue caked to the china; glass ashtrays criss-crossed with the grey fingers of burned-out cigarettes; macabre dolls; strings of coloured Mardi Gras pearls, and grotesque African wood masks. Dollar bills were tucked into glasses and paperclip boxes and stuffed behind sepia photographs showing finely dressed descendants on sunny afternoons grinning for the camera. Everything was covered with a film of dust and dried splashes of candle wax. It was more like a proud, bereaved grandmother's treasure trove than the temple of a much-maligned religion.

"It is unfair to say that voodoo is evil. It isn't. We believe in many good things, like respecting your elders and doing good to people while you are alive," said Miriam. "The rituals are important. Our ancestors

need sustenance and that is the best way to feed them. We give an offering to the Gods before we eat."

Miriam had a certain magic about her, a calming influence that was a pleasure to experience. She had a lazy voice and dancing eyes. She made me feel safe. Outside the window of the temple was one of the most decadent cities on Earth but in Miriam's temple was peace.

I asked her if she had a spell to silence a noisy neighbour and she laughed. "In New Orleans everybody has a noisy neighbour," she said. "You need to find out his name and talk to him indirectly through a mirror in your apartment - tell him his music is beautiful but not at 2 o'clock in the morning. He is a lonely soul. He is being noisy because he wants friendship, that is all."

I had expected her to impart to me the secrets of some wicked spell but instead she had nothing but compassion and sympathy in her thoughts. I left Miriam with the scent of incense in my hair, a love potion recipe in my pocket and my faith in humanity at least partly restored.

A few hours later at dawn, I went down to the Mississippi for the last time. I had followed this beautiful river from its source in Lake Itasca, Minnesota. In five weeks I had got to know it well. It had become a friend. I brushed an empty bottle of nasal decongestant from a rock by the scummy waterline and sat down to say my goodbyes.

I felt privileged that I had known this mighty river and was sad to leave it. I felt full of the spirit of the Mississippi.

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The bridesmaid catches the bouquet



Second city but not second-class: above, sculpture outside the Victoria Art Museum; above right, Melbourne's skyline from the Yarra. Photographs: Nick Servan and Gillhams/Robert Harding

Australia's second city is tops for food, gardens and Victorian town halls. Tony Wheeler toasts his adopted home of Melbourne

It seems impossible to mention Australia's number two city without comparing it with the number one. But there can be distinct advantages to having a more glamorous sibling—even one as sexy as Sydney. OK, nobody wants to be the ugly sister, cruelly forced to remind the beautiful Princess of her place in the universe, but having somebody else frying under the spotlight, besieged by spotty teenage admirers and stalked by obsessives can be relaxing.

It is no bad thing, after all, to be able to find a table free in a favourite restaurant. And if you don't yet have a favourite, just wander down crowded and colourful Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, which seems to have dedicated itself to providing at least one restaurant for every cuisine on earth.

Personal recommendations include the Provincial Hotel (now very un-provincial, rather stylish, in fact), The Fitz (one of the best breakfast spots in Melbourne) and Charmaine's (for the city's best ice cream).

In fact, the range from Ethiopian to Thai along Brunswick Street is only the start. You can catch the sun at the restaurant-packed riverbank South Gate Centre and head for France in Simply French or Bistro Vite.

For people-watching, counter-cultural St Kilda is probably the place, whether it's in sophisticated Madame Joe Joe's or hip places like the Dog's Bar or Greasy Joe's. You can even enjoy your Melbourne meal while trundling around the city on one of the famous trams, the nearest thing Melbourne has to an instantly recognisable symbol. Never expect great food in any restaurant that moves, floats or rotates is a time-honoured maxim, but perhaps trundling is a bit different; the food on board the tram is pretty good.

The city's upside-down river, the brown (muddy, not dirty if you don't mind) Yarra coils through the city, providing entertainment all the way. Hire a bicycle from the riverside bike rental agencies and you can pedal your way past the barbecues, following one of the longest bike tracks in Australia, a car-free route along the riverbank which stretches for more than 20km from the very centre of the city.

If you like your boating with a glass of wine in hand, rather than an oar, head in the other direction where the river widens out, past the skyscrapered city centre and Melbourne's busy container port, and on under the soaring West Gate Bridge to the huge sweep

of Port Phillip Bay. Cruise boats start from the riverbank near Flinders Street railway station in the centre of the city and shuttle up and down this working stretch of the river. On weekends, the waters of the bay are dotted with sails ranging from countless windsurfers to hulking maxi-yachts.

There's plenty of bluster, too, in the State Parliament—one of the less well-known tourist attractions. A couple of years ago, Australian politics seemed to be heading towards terminal boredom until Melbourne (and the state of Victoria) elected Jeff Kennet. He quickly became Australia's best known and most quoted politician. Our Jeff, as even the most rabidly anti-Kennet Melburnians find themselves fondly referring to him, is an antipodean Maggie Thatcher: a right-wing pit bull dedicated to putting his boot into everything from unions, to his own mouth, to the accelerator of his car. When he was nabbed for breaking the speed limit while taking a Mercedes full of German businessmen on tour, the story pushed all other news off the front page of Melbourne papers for days.

Perhaps he'd already hinted what was going to happen, for one of Jeff's first moves after his election was to get rid of the state's nice green-and-white car licence plates proclaiming that you were in the Garden State, and replace them with something much more zappy announcing that Victoria was "On the Move". Nevertheless, the city's parks and gardens remain a delight. The Golden Mile of the inner city is virtually ringed by parks, including the Fitzroy Gardens, where you can stumble upon Captain Cook's cottage, bought, dismantled and shipped out to Australia from its native Yorkshire back in 1934.

This is certainly a green city and there's nowhere greener than the stunning Botanic Gardens; back in 1920, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle proclaimed them absolutely the most beautiful place he had ever seen and, if anything, they've improved since then. If you're wandering the gardens, make sure to look for the colony of Queensland flying foxes, giant fruit-eating bats which have taken up residence here, far further south than their normal habitat.

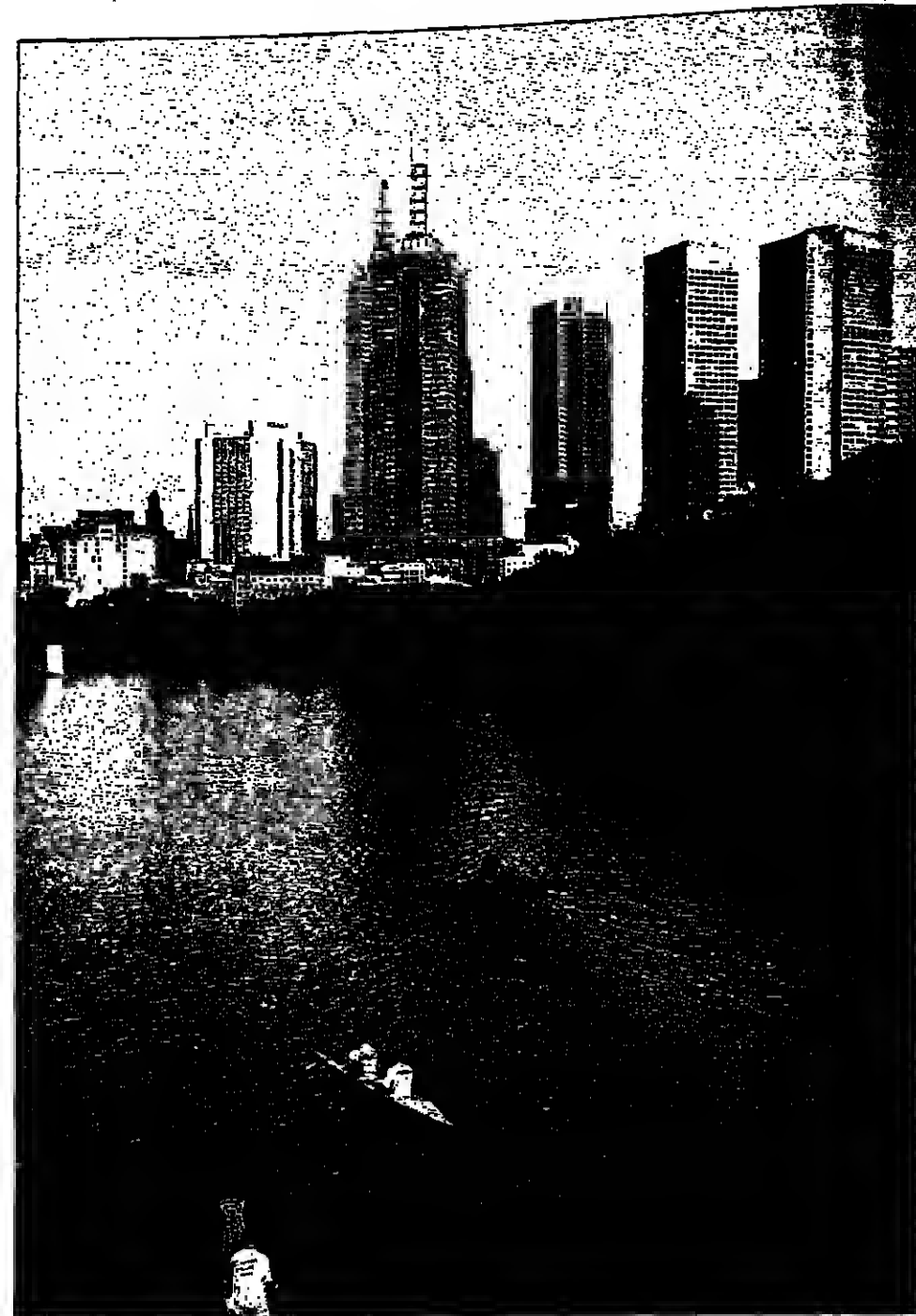
After hours, Melbourne also has a lot going for it, including one half of the world's best opera house. (The entirety of this popular mythical beast is a combination of the exterior of Sydney's opera house and the acoustics of Melbourne's.) If opera is too rarefied, Melbourne is equally active at the other extreme of the musical spectrum; this is Australia's rock 'n' roll capital, with sweaty pubs where every Aussie rock act worth an encore has cut its teeth. Try places like the down and dirty Esplanade Hotel in St Kilda or the smart Continental in Prahran.

Names like St Kilda and Prahran soon become familiar to Melbourne visitors because this is a city of localities, each with its own character. It's a factor of the city's gold rush origins when gold was discovered in Victoria in the early 1850s. Melbourne exploded, pushing out in all directions. A network of suburban railway lines rapidly followed. Melbourne quickly outpaced Sydney and for many years was Australia's largest city. Imposing Victorian town halls, products of that gold rush wealth, mark these cities within the city. The inner-city suburbs include areas such as Richmond, at one time Melbourne's Greek

centre but now taken over by Vietnamese and the Melbourne rag trade. Or South Yarra, young and stylish, with Chapel Street the most fashionable road in the city. Toorak is the home of Melbourne's old money and retired politicians. Carlton is the Italian centre which partied all night long when Italy won the football World Cup and it's the site of the manic annual waiters race—a 100-metre sprint and don't spill the cappuccino on the tray. There's great competi-

tion between Carlton coffee bars to have the fastest waiter on Lygon Street. And what about Moonee Ponds, home to one of Melbourne's best known absent citizens, Dame Edna. Now (s)he is surely the envy of Sydney.

Tony Wheeler is founder of Lonely Planet, whose second edition of the 'Melbourne City Guide' is published in Britain this month, price £6.99.



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Anyone for noodles?

If you want a holiday that will make friends green with envy, you could always try digging for your fortune in the opal fields of Cober Pedy in South Australia. Marion Bull joins the other happy 'noodlers' and learns to tell her painted lady from her mullocks

After a hard day's noodling on Cober Pedy's mullock heaps, finding only potch, I was beginning to wonder whether a dictionary might not be more handy than a pick and shovel. But once you have learnt the words, there isn't much to it. Anyone can oodle. Some people even make a living from it - searching for chips of opal discarded along with rock debris from mines on South Australia's opal fields.

For the same alone it is worth a try, but the clinch came after reading about a tourist who pocketed £2,000 worth of opals in an afternoon. I noodled furiously. By the end of the day I had acquired a headache, backache and dry skin from sifting through a large amount of potch - clear, valueless opal, found naturally at the "level" about 10 metres below ground where opal is indicated.

Cober Pedy or *kupa piti*, "white man's hole", is marooned in a bubbling sci-fi

desertscape of conical mullock heaps and hidden mine shafts in a 40km arc around town. Looking down from a small plane distorts their size - there is nothing to compare them with. From that perspective frenetic moles seem to have been at work. Half the population, and tourists too, live and sleep in underground dug-outs because the temperature is less unbearable than the desert extremes outside.

North of town within the dog fence that cuts across Australia, some light relief. The pastel-coloured Breakaways outcrop, site of ancient dreamtime wanderings, with its look-out points, gives you a glimpse of Australia's seductiveness, where a vast duck-egg blue sky and scudding clouds close in on the Moooi Plain and horizon beyond.

On the second day's noodling - I hadn't given up yet - I joined a tour guided by the diminutive kiteo-faced Lisa-Jane Woodhall, as unlikely a miner as ever licked a rock. She was not 14 as I'd thought, but 26. After arriving in the opal fields a few years ago with no knowledge of mining, she is now part-owner of the Opal Quest mine, along with self-made millionaire Jon James. There are quite a few in Cober Pedy. You wouldn't know it. They blend in as imperceptibly as the dog-outs they live in.

Noodling along with Lisa-Jane I'd covered the cost of the tour within the first 10

minutes. Attempting to conceal the shameful squealing excitement of finding what amounts to buried treasure, I picked up a piece of painted lady - bluish green opal - followed by half a dozen other pieces of varying quality that day. By then I was hooked. Too much of a trophy to take to a buyer, I kept it.

Scrutinising white rock in blazing sunshine is helped by a plastic water spray - opal shines up in the wet. But Lisa-Jane and Jon really did lick the rocks - all miners do. After all, spittle is more readily available than water.

Most of the world's precious opal is mined in Cober Pedy. An inland sea once covered the area. As it dried up due to climatic changes, opal, hydrated silica in a gel form, was deposited between rock crevices along with fossils between two and 70 million years ago.

Miners sometimes gouge out opalised translucent shells. An 80kg slab of opalised mussels and clams thrown together by the force of some ancient flood was revealed recently. Like a massive dish of petrified mussels *marinière*, some still open, it is the largest such specimen ever found.

I was taken to a musselerman's underground home in the desert. It had the surreal number of 21 rooms. Too modest at first to have his photograph taken ("I look

too scruffy"), the miner, John Dunstan, told me he had not intended to cut away so much rock to live in, but two rooms into the rock he decided to hack out a pantry. This small area alone revealed £30,000 worth of opal. "So I kept on digging," he said logically.

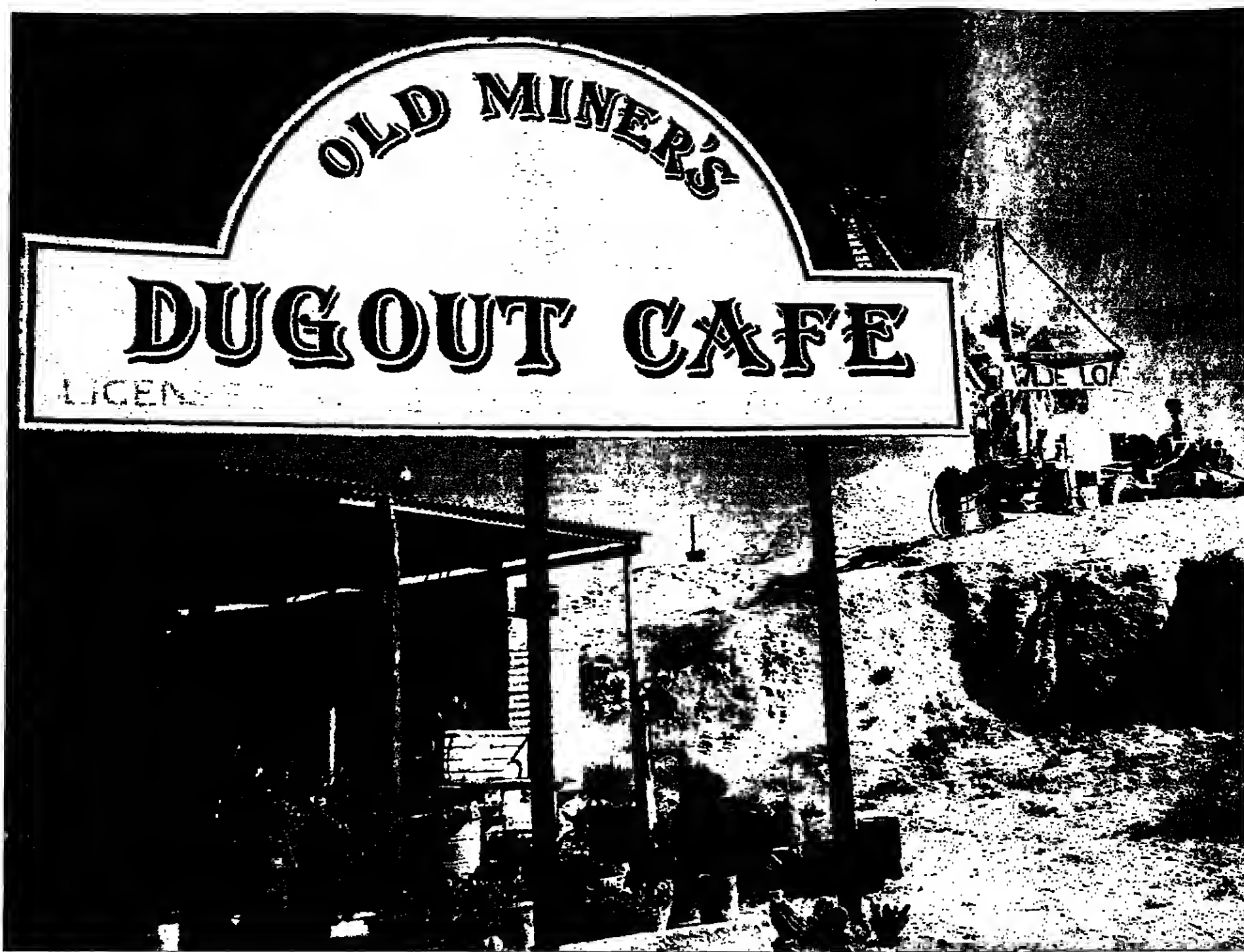
Cober Pedy attracts the unconventional. Not everyone makes a quick fortune. Some leave penniless, even fingerless. But for the casual visitor, noodling can be exciting, fun and is tolerated, as long as the miners' permission is sought. Wandering

around the shafts unsupervised is dangerous and not permitted.

Noodling only scratches the surface, as it were. When invited to descend the narrow 40ft shaft by ladder I pleaded claustrophobia and fear of scorpions. It was the best I could think up. Jon James patiently took me round the easy way at the back, where a gentle stroll down a slope to the first level meets a network of warren-like drives. Lisa-Jane not only explained how the drives were blasted. She made a bomb. Rolled-up newspaper, aluminium nitrate

and detonator were all casually explained with a wave of a lighted cigarette that danced around in the dimly-lit cave like a conductor's baton.

"And then," she summed up, "we have about two minutes to get out ..." I doubted this, since it had taken about five to get down there. But the hairy demonstration was mercifully short, otherwise I'd have made an exception and scaled the ladder to the surface before you could say mullock heaps. I'd entered the mine feeling like an old hand. But give me noodling any day.



Opal options: half the population of Cober Pedy live underground - where the temperature is less unbearable than the extremes on the surface. Above, the entrance to the Dugout cafe/cavern, and left, the gouged-out bedroom of a local miner. Photographs: Marion Bull

GOING UNDER

Getting there

In the past 10 years, air fares to Australasia have fallen by half. For the absolute lowest prices to Melbourne and Adelaide (the closest gateway for Cober Pedy), call Austravel (0171-734 7755) and ask about its charters and charter/scheduled combinations, which start at about £500 plus taxes of up to £50.

The 1998 fares war to Australasia looks like starting even earlier and cutting rates even deeper than usual. International fares are almost always lower through a travel agent than direct from the airline. Services via Japan are among the cheapest and fastest, but for Adelaide

or Melbourne you'll need an add-on domestic flight.

Getting in

To visit Australia you need either a visa or an Electronic Travel Authority, issued by many airlines and specialist agencies. Call 0891 600333 for more information.

Getting around

Ansett and Qantas, the two leading domestic airlines in Australia, both operate airpass schemes. Providing you take a minimum of two flights, you pay £105 for each sector (with an extra £15 for particularly long flights). People who fly to

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A range of bus passes is available on Greyhound (01342 317317), culminating in a year of unlimited travel around Australia for £581 (as long as you join the YHA, first; otherwise it costs £103 more).

Rail passes, both regional and national, can be obtained from Long Haul Leisure, PO Box 113, Peterborough PE3 8HY (01733 335599).

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IT'S CHANGED ... HAVE YOU?

A trawl through Norfolk history

For an intriguing, educational insight into a community closely knit by its links with the fishing trade, visit a living museum in King's Lynn says Louise Duffield.

There's nothing like reality for bringing history alive. And when you step through the doors into the two remaining cottages of King's Lynn's last fishing yard you can't fail to be thankful that we live in the 1990s. Each cottage is a tiny one-up-one-down home - with rooms no bigger than 12 feet by 4 feet.

You can almost hear young visitors gasp when they are told that nine children - sleeping top to toe - shared one bed, while mum and dad slept on the floor. And when they realise there is no running water, no bath and no toilet... well, it really hits them how difficult times were. True's Yard is a fascinating insight into how the fishing community of King's Lynn lived and worked for centuries. It's all the more remarkable since the great majority of "staff" are volunteers.

Once there were hundreds of tiny cottages crammed into yards in the tightly-knit community known as the North End. The fishing families seldom married outside the community and rarely left the area under the shadow of the medieval chapel of St Nicholas, except to put to sea. But with the 1930s came Slum Clearance Acts, demolition and the loss of the fishermen's yards.

That was only a few years ago when a campaign to save the last two remaining cottages was launched. The complex of True's Yard, with its carefully restored adjoining homes, is the result of a successful mission to save part of King's Lynn's nautical history.

True's Yard fishing museum has a wealth of memorabilia from the days of fishing under sail, models of old fishing smacks and hand-knitted "ganseys" - the distinctive woollen sweaters worn by the fishermen and usually knitted by their wives from patterns handed down verbally through the generations.

Visitors can also see a samphire cart which has been hawked around King's Lynn by five generations of one family. A typical Lyno fishing boat, known as a smack, is currently being fully restored.

A 15-minute video charts the history of the town's fishing, and photographs and exhibits bring the community alive. All displays in the museum have been donated by North End families, some of whom act as guides to give a realistic insight into what life was once like in this close-knit area.

More than anything else, though, the cottages form the focal point of the museum - one furnished in the period around 1850 and the other in 1920s style. They illustrate just how spartan life was for the fishing folk. Each has a yellow brick floor on to which the homeward-bound fisherman would shoot his catch of shellfish ready for sorting by his family. And each has a rag rug, always with the colour red featured in it to ward off the devil should he look down the chimney.

The museum, with the help of lottery money, has expanded recently and has added a "hands-on" room specifically for children. Water experiments will be featured soon.

The visitors Anne Powles, a school teacher, went to True's Yard, with her daughters Kathryn, 11, and Victoria, seven.

Anne: We got an awful lot more out of the visit by having a guide who was a descendant of one of the old North End fishing families. He had a wealth of information and could answer any questions we asked. The enthusiasm of the volunteers - some of them just teenagers - for their heritage really came over strongly.

To think that so many people lived in those tiny cottages is amazing. They must never have had any privacy. Their lack of belongings really hit me. I was also fascinated by the many wallpaper samples which have been uncovered in the cottages.

Everything at the museum was very nicely finished off and the plants and flowers gave an added touch. The café was clean and the gift shop spacious.

I think the museum gave good value for money. When you go out you don't like to feel you are being fleeced, but this is a place where you would be quite happy to stop for drinks and a cake. Usually you tend not to go and have a look at things on your doorstep, but I imagine True's Yard would appeal to a lot of local people as well as tourists.

Kathryn: I liked the cottages best because it was really interesting to see how people used to live. I thought the writing in the school book on display was very neat. I thought it was funny when we were told that the children in the old school photo had all been given smart collars to wear by the photographer, who then took them away to be used in his next school photo session. This trip helped me with my history at school. I want to go back when all the water experiments have been set up. I think the fishermen must have been very brave. I wouldn't have liked to have lived in those days.

Victoria: I liked walking through the whale's mouth into the activity room. I also liked the stones on the wall near the shrimps. They were fossils. I thought the model of the fisherman with his big boots near him was good. I also liked the cottages but I wouldn't have wanted to share a bed with so many brothers and sisters.

The deal
True's Yard is in North Street, King's Lynn, Norfolk (01553 770479).

Opening times: daily, except Christmas Day, 9.30am-4.30pm, with last admission to the museum at 3.45pm.

Admission: £1.90 adults, £1.50 concessions, £1 for children, under fives free.

Access: Accessible by wheelchair and for pushchairs everywhere, except the upstairs rooms of the cottages. Signing guides and touch tours for hearing and vision impaired visitors are available most of the time by arrangement.

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Net assets: part of the True's Yard display. Photograph: John Lawrence

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Seriously small: miniature horses should be no more than 34 inches high at the shoulder. Above, Tikki Adorian, chair of the British Miniature Horse Society, with one of her charges
Photographs: Andrew Buiman

They look like horses, smell and behave like the real thing and are increasingly popular. But they're less than three feet high. C. is Mowbray enters the Lilliputian world of miniature horses at a diminutive stud farm.

My little pony – small, perfectly formed and thoroughbred

At the sunset of their careers, old equestrians do not die or even fade away – they just downsize. Riders who once fearlessly urged their horses to jump over six-foot-high fences are increasingly settling their sights on something rather smaller when their days in the saddle are over.

Which helps to explain why the world of miniature horses, in which fully-grown equines as small as labradors can change hands for mammoth prices, is booming. Once a horse lover, it seems, always a horse lover, and difficulties such as age, infirmity and even severe physical handicap need not prevent you from keeping a thoroughbred when you are no longer capable of handling the full-scale thing.

For miniature horses are seriously

small. Standing no more than the permitted maximum of 34 inches at the shoulder, they can be kept in an ordinary back garden, provided the owners really know what they are doing and feed and exercise them properly.

"This is what makes them so popular with former riders who are no longer capable of riding but who still want to own a horse," says Tikki Adorian, the chair of the British Miniature Horse Society.

"We also find that they are becoming popular with couples whose adult children used to ride as youngsters. They have never ridden themselves, but they miss having a horse about the place and keep a miniature instead as a pet. Miniatures feel, smell and behave like real horses because that is exactly what they are and they have to be treated as such."

The history of miniature horses is

shrouded in mystery and a paucity of documentation, but it is certain that they are directly descended from a tiny creature which roamed the earth 60 million years ago. In Britain their survival has, however, been at some risk on a number of occasions. Henry VIII, in particular, ordered that all mature horses under a certain height should be slaughtered and buried. He was apparently anxious to breed a new race of super-equine for battle which would leave the enemy as also-rans.

Fortunately, his rustic subjects chose to ignore him and continued using them for racing, hauling in fuel from the peat moors and pulling coal out of the earliest mines. Later monarchs recognised their charm and it became the fashionable thing at Court to be seen trotting out with a miniature.

Celebrities have been keeping them ever

since. Current owners include the actor Patrick Mower, the designer Paolo Gucci, and a number of Eastern royal families. A full list of such luminaries is impossible to come by because, to safeguard their privacy, many buy their miniatures through an agent and are never registered as the owners.

Yet while the trade in miniatures is a multi-million-dollar industry in America, the creatures are generally far from expensive in Britain. Although a top thoroughbred can fetch £12,500, the average price is only £1,300 for fillies and £650 for colts. A poor but healthy specimen can cost as little as £50.

"Someone who is knowledgeable can keep them on a back-garden lawn which is the same as a field is to a full-size horse," adds Mrs. Adorian.

"The problem is, however, that even the

smallest horse can churn up the ground with its hooves in wet weather. There are other difficulties as well. Some garden plants can be poisonous to them, neighbours might object, and, depending on where you live, you might be contravening council by-laws by keeping them too close to a house."

Mrs Adorian has encountered every snag involved in keeping miniatures since falling in love with them while learning to ride on one 52 years ago at the age of three. She started breeding them when only 19 and now has 300 on her 200-acre stud farm in West Sussex – nearly a quarter of the entire register of the British Society. The number of unregistered horses is unknown and the Society would like to trace them in the hope of finding stock which will improve the national pedigree.

Her string includes what is registered in

the Guinness Book of Records as the smallest horse in the world, five-year-old Toy Horse Countess Natushka (Tushie for short) who stands at just 27 inches. Tushie's title is about to be taken from her by an American usurper called Hope.

Mrs Adorian was heavily involved with the International Miniature Horse Society until five years ago when she fell out violently with members who, she claims, were trying to pass off British-bred horses as American. Believing that the British breeding herd was in danger of losing its identity, she founded the British Society to preserve and improve the blood lines. The Society is now developing competitions – including showjumping classes in which the owner has to run alongside the animal and jump the same fences.

"If you are hooked on miniatures, you are really hooked and I know of marriages which have ended because of them. One partner becomes so addicted to them and devotes so much time to them, that the other partner feels left out and becomes jealous."

"People seeing them for the first time are usually stopped in their tracks. They are just the most amazing creatures."

The ash could have turned to ashes before my eyes

What started out as a most satisfying project almost resulted in disaster, the implications of which were enough to turn this woodcutter's knees to sawdust.

My project for the afternoon seemed quite straightforward: to fell a dead ash which was looming over our lane. The farmer on whose land the tree stood had agreed that if cut it up, I could have the firewood. Being only an amateur woodsman, I do not often

drop trees across public roads. Still less am I used to doing it on a one-in-four slope, with high banks on either side of an eight-foot fairway. Nevertheless, at the dead hour of 3pm hardly any traffic passes our way, and I could find no good reason to prevaricate.

Luckily the tree's natural inclination was ideal, and I needed no wedges or ropes to drop it uphill and across the lane at an angle. A couple of minutes with the power-saw at full revs, and *crash!* – over it went, dead on line.

As always, the trunk looked bigger down than up – a formidable bulk, 18 inches in diameter at the bottom. The need to clear the fairway was urgent, so I started cutting off logs about a foot long and manoeuvring them into the gully at the edge of the tarmac. On a hot afternoon, I was soon pouring with sweat; toiling away, I realised belatedly that I was creating a substantial heap. Nevertheless, I was determined to swag the whole lot away in one go, for good firewood left on the roadside has a habit of disappearing in the night.

I went through one tank of fuel and started on a second. Then a burst of sparks betrayed the fact that I had hit grit, embedded in the bark. In a split second the edge had gone from the

chain's teeth: their output changed from flakes of wood to dust, and I ceased to make headway.

A stoppage for sharpening was inevitable. Then, probably, haste made me careless. As one more round came free, I failed to stabilise it: toppling over, it knocked another log off its flat surface.

DUFF HART-DAVIS

on to its curved circumference, and both rolled away downhill, rapidly accelerating. Ye gods! In a trice the lane had become an iceless replica of the Cresta Run: steep gradient, blistering curves, high banks, lethal missiles hurtling down. I dumped the saw and lit off in pursuit. When I ripped off my safety helmet, that, too, started to roll, so I kicked it into touch and ran.

Too late! Each of the runways weighed nearly 80lbs. The last I saw of them, they were going well round a left-hand bend and starting to bound. I had horrific visions of the havoc they could cause. They would smash hell out of the radiator of any up-coming car. If they jumped at a bad moment they might decapitate the driver. They would certainly dislodge or annihilate any pedestrian they hit.

At such bad moments, the imagination moves like lightning. I thought of the bus full of National Trust grannies which had tried to come up the lane, and got stuck, the week before. I thought of the red Ford Capri, venerable but much loved, which stands parked outside the cottage at the end of the second straight.

As I ran, I listened for the *crump* of a major impact, or at least a scream, curse or groan. Dreading the worst, I rounded a long, left-hand bend. Nothing – no corpses, no logs. A 100-yard straight, another long bend, the second straight, this one

aimed dead at the Capri. No crump, no dent – but still no logs. Had they done a shuttlecock and, at a left-hander, leapt the fence into the field?

Another left-hander, then a right, a third straight. At last, 500 yards down, one of the boundaries had come to rest by a stile leading on to a footpath. The other must have carried on, past my own house, past my neighbour. On I went, right to the bottom of the lane, right to the patch of mud by the post box. Half a mile from the scene of the crime, there was still no trace of the second tearaway.

At least nobody was dead. Hustling back uphill, I grabbed saw and helmet and

returned to the attack. Three trailer-runs were needed to bring home all the booty, and as I was unloading the last of it, my neighbour, a retired judge, came round to ask if I had lost anything.

Earlier, he had been considerably surprised to see a hefty log turn at right-angles off the lane, roll into his drive and thud gently to rest in his gateway. When he heard where it had come from, he turned pale.

Now I have a ton and a half of prime ash stacked in my woodshed. But every time I bring in a basket of logs during the winter, I shall be haunted by memories of those ghastly seconds when I vainly gave chase to the two that got away.

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NATURE NOTE

Next week will be a time of high excitement in woods harbouring fallow deer, for the annual rut is reaching its peak. Each master buck takes up a stand, often no bigger than a couple of tennis courts, and paces up and down it uttering loud groans or grunts. The noise, like that of a giant pig, serves both as a summons to the does, and as a challenge to lesser males, which dart about nervously on the perimeter of the stand, trying to get in on the action. If a newcomer decides to take on

the master buck, the pair may walk a few yards shoulder to shoulder, on parallel courses, as if ignoring each other, then suddenly wheel inwards, lock antlers, and wrestle furiously, crashing through undergrowth until one gives way. Bucks are usually most active at night: they often go on roaring until dawn, but fall quiet as daylight comes up.

Duff Hart-Davis

P D

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The pleasures of watching paint dry

Five years ago, fireman Bob Erends took up painting. He has since held 15 solo exhibitions of his work and runs art classes for people who want the benefit of his self-taught wisdom on their master works. *Sally Staples* brushes-up on her watercolours.

Watching Bob Erends give a demonstration to 16 people on a four-day residential course at Earmley near Chichester in Sussex, it is easy to see his appeal. He dispenses with any professorial mystique and gets straight down to the business of giving simple instructions and helpful shortcuts to achieve the desired effect.

The subject of this particular course is autumn studies and Bob is painting a landscape with silver birch trees in the foreground. "Make the branches look as though they're growing by painting them at the same time as the trunk," he says. "If you wait for the trunk to dry and then do the branches they'll look stuck on."

And he's not afraid of stating what might be obvious to some of his pupils. "Don't touch it to see if it's dry because then you leave nasty fingermarks if it's not."

By the time he comes to putting the foliage on his trees by dabbing the branches with a sponge, the group is entranced. He shows them how to hold the brush in line with the tree trunk to paint the bark and within seconds of what looks like a few casual movements two remarkably crafted silver birch trees are created before our eyes.

John Stallwood, a retired optician and publisher from Burgess Hill, is delighted with what he has learned so far. "Bob's technique is so different from anything I've seen in books," he said. "We were agog at the way he just got hold of a colour and went for a broad brush - and yet the detail was just there."

When the demonstration is over, the students pick up their materials and venture outside to find a suitable subject to paint. Many pick a pretty brick house in the grounds and settle down to try and bring some of Bob's technique to their work. The range of ability is wide - varying from beginner through to painters who sell their work.

Sarah Harris, 30, who comes from Hove in Sussex where she works in a centre for people with learning difficulties, has never painted with water colours before but was inspired to give it a go after her sister went on a similar course.

Elizabeth Hill went to art college 30 years ago and hasn't picked up a paintbrush since. She has taken time off from a high powered job in the NHS to see if she can recapture her old enthusiasms. "I remember perspective and the drawing but water-colour is a very specific kind of work."

Company director John Hutchinson from Edinburgh received a voucher for the course at Earmley as a 50th birthday present from his wife. "The wonderful thing is having so much time to paint. At home I can only give myself a couple of hours here and there. I wanted to work at skies and seas and that is one of the things on offer here. There is a friendly atmosphere and it's a good environment to work in."

During the four days at Earmley - weather permitting - the students will be taken by minibus to paint in the pretty seaside village of Bosham and attempt some yachting scenes at Lichenor harbour.

A large airy studio is available for demonstrations and for painting when the weather is wet. Bob also provides hundreds of photographs for those who prefer to stay in rather than paint outside.

"I do think this course should be fun," he said. "I suppose I am a bit of a Redcoat at heart, but people should get out of it what they want. Some come here wanting to be very serious and even a bit competitive about their work. And that's fine. Others are very hesitant and find that a bit of humour can relax them. You get all sorts on these courses. I've taught high court judges and dustmen and the mix is part of the fun."

The four-day Autumn Studies water colour course costs £269 for residents and £185 for non residents at The Earmley Concourse, Earmley, near Chichester, West Sussex PO20 7TL (01243 670392). There are a variety of painting courses to choose from and a range of other activities at the centre.

Similar watercolour courses can be found at: The Old Rectory Adult Education College, Fittleworth, Pulborough, West Sussex (01798 865306); Wyke Valley Arts Centre, The Coach House, Mark, St Briavel's, Lydney, Glos GL15 6QB (01594-530214).



At ease: Bob Erends' courses attract everyone from 'high court judges to dustmen'

Photograph: Andrew Hasson

GAMES

BAWN O'BEIRNE RANELAGH DON'T JUNK IT - USE IT

Last week, we drank 172 bottles of wine and made a bath mat. For anyone who already has a bath mat, or was otherwise inhibited by that recipe, we have something this week that demands the consumption of only 93 bottles. It's an oenophile's notice board.

1. Cut a piece of plywood or medium density fibreboard to the size you want.
2. Now drink 93 bottles of wine. Expensive wine is best. That is why it's so expensive.
3. Arrange the corks on the board and glue in pairs in a regular pattern.
4. Be imaginative - you can go wild

with curves or create gaps to be filled with little bits of cork.

You now have that rare thing - a noticeboard that fits its intended place on the wall.



SURVEY OF THE WEEK

On Christmas Day, playing board games is more popular than making love - according to a survey by the company TV Games. In reply to the question: "What is your favourite Christmas Day pastime?"

1. Eating without guilt
2. Drinking
3. Opening presents
4. Playing traditional family board games
5. Making love
6. Sitting down to a massive Christmas dinner
7. Going for a family walk
8. Going to church
9. Being with the family
10. Watching television

And in reply to: "Why do you play board games?" the answer "To win" only managed fifth place.

PANDORA MELLY GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

Sokari Douglas Camp, 38, sculptor

My first game began when I was three or four, and my guardian bought me an African portable stove. It was a marvellous thing shaped like an upside-down pyramid with a long stem. You hurled coal in the top and the ash fell down into the bottom, which made a hot grill-like area. You had to be in old-time Africa for that kind of thing.

I had a lovely balcony which overlooked some hills in the Yoruba land of Western Nigeria. You could watch the mist coming in while you played in the early morning. I used to cook and make revolting pretend-food in the portable stove. I used leaves and water, and lilies munched up with a few dead worms, and sometimes a bit of spit would fly in. I was feeding my dolls.

My other game was drawing stories in the sand:

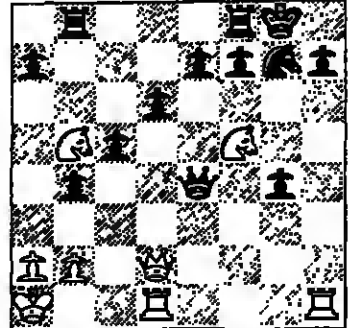
people going on boats, and little fish with teeth, and mad pictures about things that might happen to men and fish. My children tell wonderful stories, but they don't play the games I used to play. They're English girls: they re-enact their school assembly: "Get into line, no shoving at the back there!" Stuffed dogs are the things they hug at night.

I think the games I play now are cultural games. If you tell an English person that he is wonderful, he'll say "No-no!", whereas an American might say: "Yeah and I did this and that..." Then there are the awful games that black professionals play in this country: pretending to be subservient and not noticing prejudice. That kind of thing irritates me terribly. The game I play is to exaggerate being foreign; I talk about my blackness, which a lot of white people don't like to hear about because it makes them feel uncomfortable.

CHESS: WILLIAM HARTSTON

Richard Réti (1889-1929) was one of the most important figures in the world of chess between the wars. Quite apart from a string of excellent tournament victories, he composed some of the finest endgame studies, founded the "hypermodern" school of chess, set a record by playing 29 games at the same time while blindfolded and wrote two of the best books in the whole of chess literature, *Masters of the Chessboard* and *New Ideas in Chess*. It is to these that one should turn for the real favour of Réti's cultured thoughtfulness - he had an elegance of prose that fully matched his delicate style of play. His creative achievements at the board, however, are well captured in *Richard Réti's Best Games* by the late Harry Golombek, which has recently been reissued by Batsford (price £13.99) in a new edition with corrections and additions to the analysis by John Nunn.

Golombek described the following game as "one of the most exciting games of the 1920s". After five moves, a symmetrical position in the English opening was reached. Nowadays, we would probably see White playing for a space advantage with 6.0-0 0-0 7.d4, but Réti hatched an extraordinary plan with 6.d3 and 7.Be3! followed by Q-side castling and a vigorous K-side attack.



moves (see diagram). Instead of 25.Ng3! Qg6 (25... Qb7 26.Qh6 wins for White), 26.Rh6, Réti erred with 25.Nxg7? Kxg7 26.Qh6+, but Black went wrong with 26... Kg8? instead of the superior 26... Kh8! which would have left him on top.

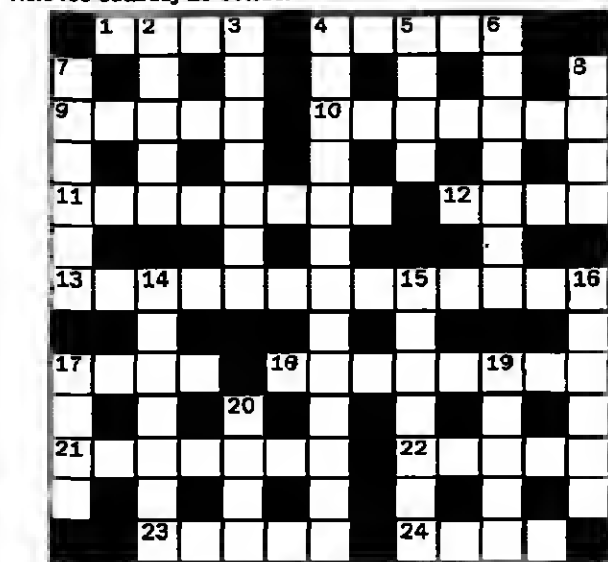
White: Richard Réti
Black: Albert Becker
Vienna 1923

1 Nf3 Nf6 16 f3 b4
2 c4 c5 17 Nb5 Nxe2+
3 g3 g6 18 Kc2 Nxc3
4 Bg2 Bg7 19 fxe4 Nxe4
5 Nc3 Nc6 20 dxe4 Qe6
6 d3 0-0 21 Nf5 Qxc4+
7 Be3 d6 22 Kb1 Qxe4+
8 h3 Bd7 23 Ka1 hxe4
9 Qd2 Rb8 24 Bxg7 Nxc7
10 Bh6 Ne8 25 Nxc7 Kxc7
11 h4 Bg4 26 Qh6+ Kg8
12 h5 gxf5 27 Rdg1 Kh8
13 Nb4 Qd7 28 Rxc4 Qxh1+
14 Be4 Nd4 29 Oxd1 Rg8
15 0-0-0 b5 30 Rxc8+ resigns

Golombek always considered this his best book, which makes it all the more regrettable that Batsford have misspelt his name on the front cover.

CONCISE CROSSWORD

No.3433 Saturday 18 October



- ACROSS**
- 1 Trigonometrical function (4)
 - 2 Suffering from tedium (5)
 - 3 Accumulate (5)
 - 4 Partially cover (7)
 - 5 Domicile (8)
 - 6 Gulf state ruler (4)
 - 7 Get the wrong end of the stick (13)
 - 8 Oversupply (4)
 - 9 Musical composition (8)
 - 10 Leave (7)
 - 11 Asian river (5)
 - 12 Water-jugs (5)
 - 13 Convent women (4)
- DOWN**
- 1 Foolish (5)
 - 2 Greek letter (7)
 - 3 Marks to one's credit (7,6)
 - 4 Dance (4)
 - 5 Problem (7)
 - 6 Bicycle made for two (6)
 - 7 Stimulus (4)
 - 8 Banger (7)
 - 9 Subdivision (7)
 - 10 Sleepy (6)
 - 11 Happy (4)
 - 12 French sculptor (5)
 - 13 Lazy (4)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:
ACROSS: 1 Shorten, 5 Suite (Short and sweet), 8 Olive, 9 Callous, 10 Niagara, 11 Buyer, 12 Flight, 14 Ramble, 17 Norma, 19 Carbine, 22 Sulphur, 23 Drake, 24 Error, 25 Earnest, DOWN: 1 Spoon, 2 Origami, 3 Thine, 4 Nectar, 5 Soluble, 6 Irony, 7 Ensures, 12 Finesse, 13 Heather, 15 Imitate, 16 Scarce, 18 Ruler, 20 Rider, 21 Elect.

BRIDGE: ALAN HIRON

Game all dealer South

North
♠AK
♥J 10 7 6
♦K 7
♣K Q 10 9 7

West
♠10 3 2
♥Q 8 4 3
♦10 9 5 3 2
♣2

East
♠J 4
♥A 5 2
♦A J 6 4
♣8 5 4 3

South
♠Q 9 8 7 6 5
♥K 9
♦Q 8
♣A J 6

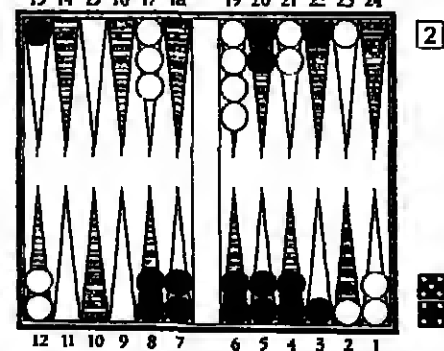
In his haste to give his partner a ruff, East missed his only opportunity to give declarer a chance to go wrong on this deal.

South opened One Spade, North responded Two Clubs and, with a close decision whether to rebid his spades or support his partner, South chose Three Clubs. He need not have worried, for he had another chance when North advanced with Three Hearts and, with no sure guard in diamonds, he could bid his spades again, after which North raised to game. Yes, Three No-trumps would have been a doddle.

West led ♠2 against Four Spades (clearly a singleton) and, after winning in dummy, declarer played off ♠AK on which West followed with the three and the two, showing a third trump and an interest in ruffing something. Even the waiter knew what was happening. Short of a quick entry to hand to draw the last trump, declarer led ♠7 from dummy. East pounced with his ace to give West his club ruff but the defenders now had only ♥A to make.

East should have realised that two heart tricks were necessary to defeat the contract. If West held ♥K, then it did not matter whether the defenders took their heart tricks before or after the club ruff, but, if West held only ♥Q, it was essential to lead a low heart first to give South a chance to go wrong.

BACKGAMMON: CHRIS BRAY



Black has a fine position here and would be unlucky not to reap the benefit of having doubled. Quite a number of his wins will be gammons. He now has an innocuous 54 to play. Before looking at candidate plays he should decide on his plan for the position.

The surest way to lock up victory would be to extend his five-point prime to a six-point prime. Other elements of his plan are to release his spare man on the 22-point and to keep White's three back men pinned as deep in his home board as possible. How then should he play the 54? There are four reasonable plays:

(a) 22/13 (b) 8/3, 8/4 (c) 8/3, 22/18 (d) 8/3, 13/9.

There are others, for example 7/2*, 7/3, but they do not meet the requirements of the position. Of the four, (a) should be discarded quickly as it allows White a double shot at the man on the 3-point and it will take time to extend the prime even if White doesn't hit. All the other plays involve making the 3-point which is the right idea. After giving the cube away, (b) is not aggressive enough as the spare man on the 4-point will not be much use there. The choice lies between (c) and (d). The plays are very close but (c) gets the nod because of the way in which it duplicates White's good numbers.

White would need a six to escape his back man and also to hit the man on his bar-point. He could use a one three times: to hit on his bar, to hit on his 12-point and to anchor on Black's two-point.

Give someone the opportunity to make the wrong choice and more often than not they will! This concept of duplication occurs again and again and is an extremely useful

A rock and a hard pace

If your idea of a good break is a 16-mile run through a humid jungle of sheer cliffs, stubby granite fingers and grotesque pinnacles, Jonny Beardsall may have just the thing for you...

Mountain races are not just for sinewy-legged obsessives. I grasped this a year ago when I first squeezed between a barefoot Borneo tribesman, a Pirelli-bellied expatriate and a 77-year-old Japanese businessman at the start of the Mount Kinabalu International Climbathon, the annual race up and down this scary 13,455ft summit in Sabah, east Malaysia. Two weeks ago I took a camera instead of my running shoes to witness this extraordinary race again.

"Climbathon" is spot on as a title for the perverse, 16-mile schlep over South East Asia's highest peak, and describes what it takes to tackle the unforgiving, jungle-swathed crown of sheer cliffs, stubby granite fingers and grotesque pinnacles. It's a gruelling hike rather than a running race, although once you've made it to Low's Peak – the top – you can speed up on the decent, with a combination of gravity and fear of long-tailed giant rats, heavy mists and gathering darkness.

When Sir Hugh Low, a government officer in what was then British North Borneo, first shivered on the summit plateau

in 1851 he could not have imagined that, nearly 150 years later, close to 200 panting men and women in slinky shorts would nip up it. The contest is now in its 11th year, and the 1997 competition lured Britain's three top mountain runners – Ian Holmes, Mark Rigby and Mark Roberts – who weaved past the wildest men of Borneo to take top honours. The day before, Angela Mudge, the British ladies mountain running champion, finished third in her event.

Such races have their origins in fell running, a sport first introduced in the 19th century by Lake District mountain guides. Although the races are regularly staged over the lumpiest parts of the British Isles and Europe, the more exotic venues such as the Cameroon, Japan, Reunion Island and Borneo are an alluring alternative.

But that the race would happen at all

this year was open to much speculation. Just days before the start, the blanket of noxious smog from forest fires burning in Indonesia was still covering the neighbouring states of Kalimantan, Brunei and Sarawak. There had also been an air crash and a ship collision to add to the grim health reports from the region. In London, a misinformed Malaysian High Commission advised would-be runners not to travel. Still, race organisers in Kota Kinabalu insisted that although Sabah is known in the brochures as The Land Below the Wind, it was also The Land Above the Haze. And it was virtually smog-free, so the race was on.

You start at a shivery 6,000ft on a metalled road beside Mt Kinabalu National Park headquarters. Lining up with 164 local and international rivals at 7am for the men's section was Londoner Howard

Dyson, a Salomon Brothers Investment banker who, with his enterprising workmate Penny North, was aiming to raise £10,000 for charity. Howard Stanton, a guest activities manager at a Sabah hotel, was also running for Britain as was Tony Harvey, an engineer who works in the shadow of the mountain. They travelled light as the route is well marked: in longer races at home, you must carry a bum bag packed with a compass, map section, windproof and survival snack.

The road becomes a narrow forest trail along which thousands of dripping tourists take two days to gasp to the top. The runners smell the jungle and feel it as overhanging thorns snag at their bare arms.

Soon steep and uneven steps break up the ascent – even the fittest find it impossible to run here. Humidity is very high and it is hard to breathe. Dyson later said

he found himself wishing he'd had a week acclimatising at altitude. With water dispensing officials placed at every half-mile point, everyone drinks as much as they can.

After a lung-bursting hour and a 5,000ft climb, Ian Holmes, in second place behind an Austrian, reached the rickety, near-sheer wooden ladders which lead up fissures in the lichen-swathed rock faces. The biggest plants are now small gnarled trees in a mossy forest, dwarfed and twisted by the rarefied mountain climate.

Another 1,000ft and Holmes was springing on to the exposed granite slabs where only sedges, grasses and tiny flowers peep from cracks in the rock. His rubber fell shoes are magic and grip like limpets to the scuzzy rocks. Here, thick fixed ropes help you to haul yourself up the steepest stretches leading to a plateau and, finally, the top.

Take a running jump: the 1997 Mount Kinabalu International Climbathon. Fell runners annually race up and down this scary 13,455ft summit in Sabah, east Malaysia. Photo: Jonny Beardsall

The leaders can see their jagged target from almost a mile away as they skirt the vast crater of Low's Gully – in which two prize nincompoops led a British Army expedition to the brink of disaster four years ago. This spawned two drama-documentaries and has made the Climbathon all the more notorious.

Up seems bad enough, but the second, downhill half of this race is equally extreme. If your knees can take it, you go quite fast. The Kadazans, the largest local tribal group, virtually sprint down, never missing a step or needing look for one. Holmes soon took the lead and completed in two hours and 47 minutes.

"Borneo, to me, has always been all about head-hunters, snakes and blood-sucking leeches," admits Holmes, a whirlpool manufacturer from Yorkshire who, with Roberts, is joint British Mountain running champion. "So when I took the lead on the twisty descent, this was perhaps why I kept pushing on, I was always imagining what might be coming up behind me."

For more information about mountain racing contact Darryl Hughes, British Athletic Federation Ltd, Athletics House, 225A Bristol Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B5 7UB (0121-440 5000). The next Mt Kinabalu International Climbathon takes place on 3-4 October 1998. Race details may be obtained from: Sabah Tourism Promotion Corporation, Mail Bag 112, 88999 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, E. Malaysia. Fax 00 6088 212 075.

What treasures lie beyond that placid exterior?

Hamish Scott explores the rolling East Lothian countryside, and finds a castle, a chapel – and the home of Dolly the sheep

Roslin is a small commuter village six miles south of Edinburgh, a sleepy little place of old stone cottages and trim suburban homes set in gentle countryside beneath the Pentlands Hills. It's the sort of village that, in a film, a pair of hikers from the city might arrive in, quite unaware of strange subcurrents swirling just beneath the placid surface...

We had come to see the carvings in Rosslyn Chapel which, according to some experts, rank amongst the finest stonework in Britain, but we found the chapel surrounded in a barn-like metal structure and, believing that it must be closed, were tempted by a finger-post beside the car park. It just said "To The Castle" – exactly what such signposts say in horror films.

The footpath led between two graveyards. There should have been a swirl of fog, and sound-effects of croaking ravens, but even on a sunny morning we felt a certain frisson as we walked the narrow passage. Ahead of us, the ground dropped steeply down into a

wooded glen, a secretive, wild landscape hidden deep below the village and the cultivated fields.

Roslyn Castle stands just inside the wood, its battered walls clinging to a pinnacle of rock 200 feet above the gorge and reached only by a narrow bridge. Built in the early 14th century by Henry Sinclair, Earl of Orkney, the castle has, despite its seemingly impregnable position, been stormed and sacked on three occasions; twice by English armies and lastly by an irate Scottish mob. Within the ruined courtyard, a delightful 17th-century house is home to the present Earl of Rosslyn who, another visitor informed us, spends his weekdays working as a policeman in Slough. The scenario, it seemed, was growing ever more improbable.

Crossing back over the bridge, we followed steps down to the gully beneath its high-arched span. The path clung to the side of the steep gorge, high above the River Esk, leading us through tangled woods and open grassy clearings. Waterfalls and rockpools sparkled in the sunlight far below and a steady roar of water sounded through the trees. At one point, we emerged on to a rocky overhang beside an ancient oak that

spread its branches out over the chasm. In the script that we were writing in our minds, this was the location for some death-defying leap. We rather wished that we had brought a picnic with us.

Our path was now descending ever deeper down into the gorge until sheer sandstone cliffs enclosed us on both sides, their eroded faces sculpted into convoluted shapes and craggy, semi-human profiles. On the

water's edge we had to scramble for a footing as the torrent rushed around our boots. This, we both decided, was not a walk for those of nervous disposition. Continuing downstream, we gradually regained height until it seemed that we were walking through the topmost branches of the trees below. On the far bank of the gorge, we saw a Gothic castle towering from the cliff-edge, a gaping cavern visible beneath its walls.

As the valley widens, the gorge gives way to open wood and pastureland. We left the river on the elbow of a sharp meander, climbing through scrub and broom to a sandy ridge, scarcely wide enough to walk along, that drops steeply to the riverbanks below, with distant views across East Lothian's rolling countryside. Turning left along a broader track, we found ourselves back in the ordinary world of fields and

modern cottages. But before returning to our car, there were still elements of mystery and romance to weave into our script. A cairn commemorates a battlefield where, seven centuries ago, Scots and English armies clashed under the command of jealous knights competing for a maiden's hand. There are the high fences and military-style buildings of the Roslin Institute, birthplace of Dolly the cloned sheep. And there is Rosslyn Chapel.

This, we discovered, was still open underneath its web of scaffolding. Nothing we had read could prepare us for the sight of its interior. Every inch of stone, from column bases to the vaulted roof, is carved with figures, symbols and abstract designs. Green Men and horned angels leer from buttresses, dancers and

musicians prance around the capitals. There are mysteries here aplenty; fruit from the New World carved before the birth of Christopher Columbus and the spiralling Apprentice Pillar that, some say, illustrates the double helix found in DNA. Stories tell of ancient relics, perhaps even the Holy Grail itself, hidden deep beneath the vaults. In the crypt, strange masonic patterns scar the dripping walls.

Back in the warmth and security of The Original Roslin Inn, we lunched off steak-and-ale pies and drank St Andrews beer whilst we reviewed our script. Hermetic mysteries and ruined castles, clones and high-born policemen, a lost world in a hidden gorge... all the elements were there, but sitting in the cosy bar, the story simply didn't seem believable.

Directions

The village of Roslin is signposted off the A701 six miles south of Edinburgh.

Park by Rosslyn Chapel. From car park, follow sign to castle and turn left between graveyards.

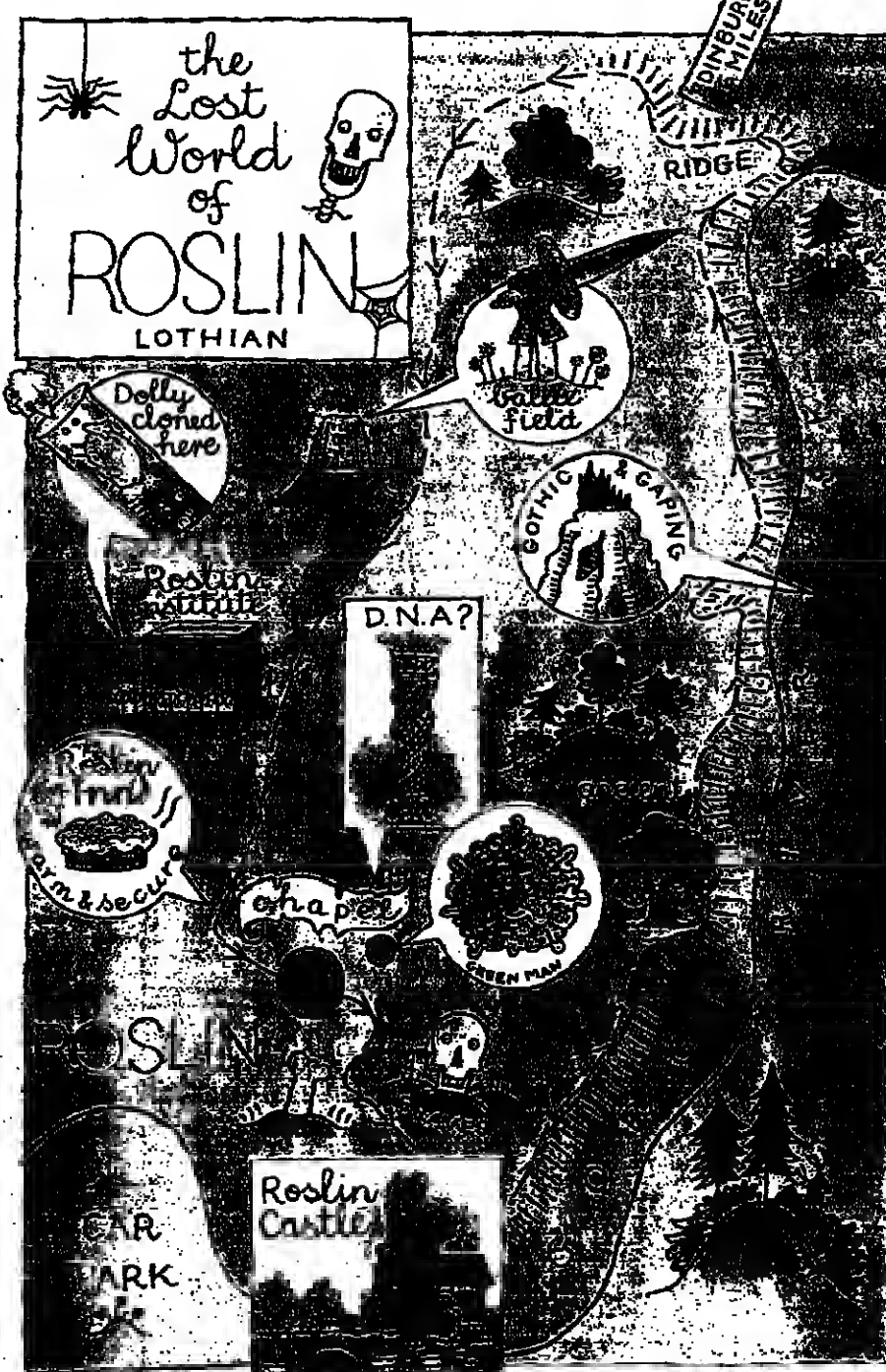
Descend steps to right of bridge to castle, then turn left along gully.

Beyond gully, fork right to follow river's course for 1.5 miles.

As river bends to right, continue ahead uphill. Turn left at cross-roads by large beech tree and follow path along ridge. After 0.25 mile, turn left along major path At Battle of Roslin Cairn, continue along lane to the Original Roslin Inn.

Length: about four miles

Maps: Ordnance Survey Landranger 66 or Pathfinder 420



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He sprinted for the try-line – but ran into a snowman built by the opposing full-back



MIKE ROWBOTTOM
ON BEING IN THE RIGHT PLACE

One of the secrets of success in sport – in life too – comes down to this right place, right time. A little guidebook* to the sport of rugby union reached me this week, containing some examples of what can happen when one of these variables goes awry.

In 1975, for instance, Ireland organised a centenary tour to New Zealand which included a warm-up game in Fiji. When they arrived in Fiji, the Irish tourists discovered the Fijian team was also on tour – in New Zealand. Right time, wrong place.

Then there was the winger who played for Villeneuve in a 1974 French club game against Villiers les Nancy. With his side 65-3 down, he intercepted a pass and sprinted for the try-line – but ran into a snowman.

It had been built by the opposing full-back during his many spare moments. Right place, wrong time.

Another Frenchman, Jean Salut, tripped on the steps up to the pitch as he ran out for his international debut in 1969, breaking his ankle. He never played for France again. Simple bad luck that. But to return to the theme.

Right place, right time. There have been moments in my life when I have experienced that strange, calm certainty.

Fornebu airport in Oslo, three months ago. The previous evening, Haile Gebrselassie of Ethiopia had kept his word and regained the world 5,000 metres record. As I made my way to the gate for an early flight back to Heathrow, I reviewed the previous lines I might use for a follow-up story.

It was not an encouraging exercise. The headlines had been such that I and most of my colleagues had not been able to attend the post-race press conference. Someone, I suddenly recalled, had a tape of it. Who was that person? Ah yes. That person was the person who was flying straight on to Stockholm. Wrong place, wrong time.

What I needed, it had to be said, in an ideal world, with the wind behind me, what I really needed was to speak with Haile Gebrselassie.

Turning 180 degrees, I saw a thin figure in a tracksuit standing on his own, his teeth implacably white. "Haile," I said. "Congratulations on last night. Great run."

"Thank you," he said, very

quietly, the half-smile widening into a dazzling fullness. I asked him about his plans for the rest of the season.

It seemed mystical. It was, in retrospect, almost logical – the world record breaker was catching an early morning flight back to his Dutch training base, and I had simply got lucky.

But my Twickenham experience. That was mystical. Accepting the offer of tickets for the 1981 Twickenham Sevens seemed like a fine idea at the time. My girlfriend's landlord played for Richmond, who were defending the title, and when he suggested we made up a party with his wife and her parents, we thought: why not?

Why not only become clear after we had committed ourselves both to the outing and the kind offer of a lift from the

parents-in-law. When the tickets arrived a couple of weeks later I registered what I took to be a ghastly clerical error.

The date for rugby's end-of-season event – May 9 – appeared to clash with that paramount occasion in the British sporting calendar: the 1981 FA Cup final.

A brief enquiry of the resident defending champion confirmed the worst. The times were out of joint. Oh, wretched spite.

I tried. I tried until 3.00pm, that wasn't too hard. I tried after 3.00pm, watching London Irish against Saracens – or was it Wasps? – weaving their way over the Wembley, sorry, Twickenham turf.

A request from the father – "any chance of a beer?" – detached me from the dutiful gathering. I like to think good

manners would otherwise have kept me there. They wouldn't, but I like to think they would.

Drifting behind the stand and past the bar, I was drawn instinctively to the Twickenham car park.

What I needed, it had to be said, in an ideal world, with the wind behind me, what I really needed was a television set.

Turning 90 degrees, I noticed a white marquee. Inside were many rows of plastic seats, all empty, all facing a little table on which stood a television set showing the 1981 FA Cup final.

One's first instinct in such transcendent moments is to expect life to throw out its grappling hooks. "Excuse me sir, can I help you?" That is what I expected to hear. "Are you with the main party?" That is what I expected to hear.

But all I heard was the rising excitement in Barry Davies's (or was it John Motson's?) voice as Tommy Hutchison gave Manchester City a 1-0 lead over Tottenham.

I thought: I'll just stay until half-time. At half-time I thought: I'll just stay until full time. At full-time I thought: I'll just stay until extra-time.

Towards the end of the match, some rugby people craned their heads round the doorway and jeered – gently. "What kind of game do you call that?" I felt able to smile indulgently.

Soon afterwards, a young lady in a white apron came in and offered me a bottle of cold beer. It came at the right time. And I knew the right place for it. *Heineken's 14 Men and a Hooker – 0171 237 5333.

Pickard teaching Rusedski to convert his chances

Tony Pickard is back on the tennis circuit as coach to Greg Rusedski. He believes the British No 1 has left Tim Henman behind and is ready for another push towards the very top.



Pickard: 'Rusedski impressed me'

Tony Pickard's studious face used to be one of the few British features at the major championships. Stefan Edberg's invigorated former coach has returned with Greg Rusedski to spice a simmering international casserole.

Rivalry? What rivalry? "I think Rusedski's left Henman behind now," Tony Pickard asserted. "Well, he has for a year, that's for sure."

Pickard has been Greg Rusedski's mentor for the best part of a month, initially by telephone, having answered the call following the dismissal of the American Brian Teacher, who in 16 months guided Rusedski up the rankings and into the final of the United States Open.

A week ago, with Pickard in attendance, Rusedski defeated Tim Henman in straight sets in the semi-finals of a Tour event in Vienna. It was the Canadian-born left-hander's first success in four matches against the 23-year-old from Oxford.

Rusedski is No 5 in the world, Henman No 19, and Pickard expects his charge to continue to pull rank, at least "until the US Open, when Greg's got to perform again".

He added, "He's got the whole of the year up to Wimbledon when he's defending nothing, so he's got a great chance to build a fantastic foundation for 1998 before 1998 is half-way gone."

Having paused for breath, Pickard and Rusedski travel to Stuttgart today for next week's \$2.3m (£1.5m) Eurocard Open, in pursuit of points to secure a place in the eight-man ATP Tour Championship in Hannover. Henman is also due to play in Stuttgart.

"Nothing would be greater than if young Henman started to hit a few more balls into court and got in the top 10," Pickard said. "That would be simply fantastic for us."

Use of the royal "we" is a Pickard idiosyncrasy from his long and successful association with Sweden's Stefan Edberg and his three-year stint as Britain's Davis Cup captain. "I got fed up with the politicking in the Davis Cup, because that's not my scene," the 63-year-old from Nottingham said.

Before his acrimonious split with the Lawn Tennis Association, Pickard brought Henman into the Davis Cup squad. Pickard's description of him, "the one bright shining light", was supposed to be off the record but quickly gained circulation.

"He was the only one we had," Pickard recalled. "Rusedski wasn't even here then, and Henman was the one that looked as though he had it. And, let's face it, up until just before the US Open Tim was still the one who was ranked No 1 in England. It's only this past four, five, six weeks that it's been changed. And it's a big leap. Now all that people can hope for here is that Rusedski stays where he is and Henman tries to get to him."

Not that Pickard adheres to the conventional view of rivalry. "Competition is a great thing," he said, "but it is a very individualistic game and I don't really think

either Rusedski or Henman think about one another when they go on the court to play a tennis match. I think they're thinking about their own performance and themselves winning. I don't think they're worried whether the other guy's winning or whether he's losing.

"The only time they look at one another possibly is when they play one another and when they look in a mirror to see who's

BY JOHN ROBERTS

won and lost. I know everybody keeps writing this business about the competition between the two of them, but I think it's all hypothetical."

Much of the credit for Rusedski's rise above Henman is due to Teacher, Pickard acknowledged. "Brian's obviously done a damn good job, and there's no taking that away from him," he said.

The Californian coaxed Rusedski to work so hard improving his groundstrokes last Christmas that Rusedski's hand blistered. Teacher then sustained Rusedski's confidence after a wrist injury interrupted a splendid week in San Jose in February during which he had defeated Michael Chang and Andre Agassi back-to-back in straight sets and taken the first set off Pete Sampras before retiring in the final.

Teacher says he was not exactly showered in praise. "After the final in San Jose," he recounted, "Tom Rusedski [Greg's father] said to me, 'Hey, you are on first base'. Then, following the US Open, where Rusedski lost to Australia's Pat Rafter in the final, Teacher said he received another assessment. "Tom said I was still on first base with Greg's serve return and he was going to have to hire somebody to teach him to hit a return. There was also talk about me not being able to scout opponents."

Finally, Teacher said, Rusedski telephoned him midway through the Grand Slam Cup in Munich, saying, "Thanks for the help, but I'm under no obligation after the Open."

Pickard said he was taken by surprise when asked to step in. "Tennis has been in my blood for most of my life, but I wasn't looking to go back on the Tour. I've got nothing to prove to anybody. Rusedski approached me, impressed me with his ambition, and that's what swayed me to say, 'Yes, OK, we'll give it a go for a year and see how it goes'. It certainly wasn't anything else that attracted me back."

Rusedski's 143 mph serve is the fastest ever recorded on the ATP Tour, and coaching him must be akin to a mechanic fine-tuning Thrust. Rusedski may not have Rolls-Royce engines, but there is more to his game than raw power.

Frew McMillan, commentating on Eurosport, has compared Rusedski's backhand volley to the master strokes of John McEnroe, Tony Roche and Rod Laver. Teacher broadened Rusedski's groundstroke game, and Pickard's aim is to continue the all-round improvement in performance and strategy.

The latest ATP Tour statistics display Rusedski's name prominently in various categories of service game leaders. He has won more service games (92 per cent) than anybody else. He is second only to Richard Krajicek, the 1996 Wimbledon champion, in points won on his first serve and to Michael Chang, the great retriever, in winning points off his second serve. Only Goran Ivanisevic has saved more break points than Rusedski, who is third in the aces count (841) behind Ivanisevic (1024) and Krajicek (862).

In spite of a marked improvement in his service returns, however, Rusedski does not rate a mention among the return of serve leaders. Pete Sampras, the world No 1, has converted most break points (49 per cent).

"All the guys that were good enough to become No 1 in the world had that wonderful capability of converting chances," Pickard emphasised. "And that's basically what it's all about, converting chances."

"All right, the younger guys that are coming on the block now, they're learning how to convert chances, and they're learning that it's not as easy to convert chances as it was when they were playing in the smaller Tour events and against the lower ranked players."

"If you play the top guys all the time, you need Sampras's experience. What's Sampras now, 26? Well, he's got two years longer stuck on his shoulders. So, OK, there's a period of time when the younger guys have got to learn how to convert. And the ones that start to convert first are the ones that are going to end up at the top of the ranking list. It's as simple as that."

"The state of the situation in the top 10 in the world right now is wide open – I mean, apart from Sampras it's wide open. Sampras is definitely above the other guys, but that doesn't mean he's going to stay there. It's terrific for the young guys, for all of them, not just for Greg. It's good for Rafter, it's good for the Spaniards. It's good for Henman. The door's open."

Pickard is not planning to be back on the road every week, but intends to accompany Rusedski to the four Grand Slams and the top events on the ATP Tour. The man who knows all about slices and chips has not become a coach potato.



Rusedski's service is now in the big league, according to ATP statistics, though he has yet to make a similar impression in the return of serve categories Photograph: David Ashdown

SPORT ON THE INTERNET

Williams lead FI web race

With the Formula One world championship to be decided next weekend in Jerez, motor racing's wide array of web sites are likely to be particularly busy over the next week.

As Williams dominate on the track with their cars, so the best web sites for the teams are Rothmans Racing, which has all the Williams information, and Renault.

The Rothmans' site has details on all the tracks, reports on this year's races, which manage to be objective, technical specs of the cars and Villeneuve's and Frentzen's diaries for each race.

Renault covers similar ground, but has a good links section to other related sites. Williams is also involved in the Autowebs'97 which carries both up-to-the-minute news, an archive of news through the season and pieces on all the drivers.

Another good site is Gale Force FI which carries all the expected reports, but in addition does have some interesting statistics for the 1997 season, including most crashes (Eddie Irvine 5), most unreliable car (Stewart – 25 breakdowns) and most completed laps (Jean Alesi followed, surprisingly, by Mika Salo).

Many of the circuits have their own web sites as well, with Monaco and Silverstone two of the better ones.

Various drivers have unofficial web sites, with the late Ayrton Senna the most popular with 10 sites, followed by Jacques Villeneuve with seven and Michael Schumacher and Damon Hill with five.

At the Ayrton Senna Memorial site you can even get your Ayrton Senna Master Card. Somehow I can't quite imagine Damon Hill's face adding to your credit rating.

For those who find Formula One rather too slow for their taste, then they can always log in to the Thrust site to read about the supersonic exploits in the Nevada desert.

— Edward Abelson

ADDRESSES

Autowebs'97
[http://f1online.com/PUB-
LIC/F1/ENG/ONLINE/HTML](http://f1online.com/PUB-LIC/F1/ENG/ONLINE/HTML)
Rothmans Racing
<http://www.rthm.com/formula1/>
Renault F1
<http://www.renaultf1.com/>
Gale Force F1
<http://www.monaco.mc/f1/>
F1 Online
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Official FIA site
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Ayrton Senna Memorial
<http://www.senna.com.br/fingles/>
Thrust
<http://thrustsc.digital.co.uk/>
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[http://www.silverstone-
circuit.co.uk/](http://www.silverstone-circuit.co.uk/)
index.htm
Monaco
[cal/gpr/f1/
index.html](http://www.monaco.mc/mona-
cal/gpr/f1/index.html)

SILVER SERVICE: THE STATISTICS

Aces	No	Matches	5 Mark Philippoussis	87	60	10= Jonas Bjorkman	52	71	Break pts saved	P/cent	Match
1 Goran Ivanisevic	1024	67	6 Thomas Enqvist	85	46	Patrick Rafter	52	71	1 Goran Ivanisevic	71	67
2 Richard Krajicek	962	58	7 Patrick Rafter	84	71				2 Greg Rusedski	70	62
3 Greg Rusedski	841	62	8 Brett Steven	84	38				3 Thomas Muster	68	54
4 Mark Philippoussis	828	60	9 Tim Henman	83	59				4 Brett Steven	68	38
5 Marco-Kevin Goetner	569	48	10 Magnus Larsson	83	54	1 Richard Krajicek	86	58	5 Mark Philippoussis	67	60
6 Alex Radulescu	512	49				2 Greg Rusedski	84	62	6 Magnus Norman	66	59
7 Pete Sampras	510	48	2nd serve won	P/cent	Match	3 Goran Ivanisevic	83	67	7 Richard Krajicek	66	58
8 Magnus Norman	491	51	1 Michael Chang	54	68	4 Pete Sampras	82	48	8 Jan Siemerink	66	38
9 Patrick Rafter	488	59	2 Greg Rusedski	54	62	5 Mark Philippoussis	81	60	9 Galo Blanco	66	32
10 Tim Henman	486	59	3 Marcelo Rios	53	69	6 Tim Henman	80	59	10 Patrick Rafter	65	71
			4 Albert Costa	53	58				<i>The statistics include every match played on the ATP Tour and Grand Slams. These are the standings as of 13 October, all the players having completed a minimum of 32 matches.</i>		
			5 Thomas Muster	53	54	7 Marc-Kevin Goellner	80	48			
Service games won	P/cent	Match	6 Pete Sampras	53	48	8 Jonathan Stark	79	38			
2 Greg Rusedski	82	62	7 Guillaume Raoux	53	46	9 Alex Radulescu	78	49			
3 Pete Sampras	91	46	8 Vincent Spadea	53	41	10 Thomas Enqvist	78	46			
4 Richard Krajicek	90	58	9 Brett Steven	53	38						
5 Goran Ivanisevic	88	67									

The statistics include every match played on the ATP Tour and Grand Slams. These are the standings as of 13 October, all the players having completed a minimum of 32 matches.

PUNTERS' GUIDE

NEWMARKET
2.15: Although his ability to cope with this dead ground and to last this trip must be taken on trust, EL-

NEWMARKET

2.15: With this clear ground and to last this trip must be taken on trust, **EL NADIM** was such a convincing winner of the Diadem Stakes over Ascot's stiff of last time that he cannot be opposed. This is only the eighth race of his career and improvement can be expected. Decorated Hero and Rebecca Sharp carry penalties and have a tough task, particularly the latter who saves her best for Ascot's round this time.

HYPERION'S

TV TIPS

4.10: It would be wrong to write off the chances of Derby winner **Benny The Dip**, but he could well be short of pace against these rivals over today's 10 furlongs. André Fabre, who has already captured the Champion Stakes with **Tell Quel** and **Dernier Empereur**, says

sort of ground, may be more of a danger here.

2.55: Only two three-year-olds have won this marathon in the past 10 years but that is a fair stride-rate. MOTET looks much the best of their generation this time. The colt was staying on strongly when winning over 2m 21 a month ago. Valagloro has far less obvious claims but represents a stable in peak form and could reach the frame at big odds. Among the older horses, Mawared has solid credentials while a return to form by the outsider Transom would not come as a complete surprise.

3.30: The biggest achievers that Britain and France can offer among the two-year-old ranks. Diggers Drawn and Xaar, take each other on and the deep impression they have already made is reflected in

colt was seeking to make his mark in the Irish Derby on unsuitably fast ground and he will appreciate this easier going. But the vote must go to PILSDUSKI. The five-year-old was second in the Arc two weeks ago but is certainly effective at this distance. In September he was eased in the closing stages when beating Desert King impressively at Leopardstown.

4.45: Kieren Fallon drove out Name Of Love to achieve a clear-cut victory on this track two weeks ago, with Flawless a length back in second. The latter responds on 31's better terms today. Previously, Flawless had again been runner-up, at Doncaster, in VIRTUOUS four lengths away in fourth. That was this filly's debut, however, and she has since shown enough when winning well

generous price, has won over course and distance, and was

[illegible]

FIRST SHOW

Newmarket - 1.40					
Horse	C	H	L	T	Y
Red Storm	12.4	12.4	12.4	12.4	

Swat Wetholm	12-1	11-1	12-1	14-1
Swat Wetholm	12-1	11-1	12-1	14-1

Top Gun	20.1	21.1	20.1	21.1
Eye-Spy	18.1	18.1	18.1	18.1
La Maffia	16.1	16.1	16.1	16.1
Unsung Hero	20.1	21.1	16.1	16.1
Deadly	18.1	19.1	16.1	19.1
Al-Addad	16.1	16.1	16.1	16.1
Prison of Death	16.1	16.1	16.1	20.1
Galt	16.1	16.1	16.1	20.1
For Your Eyes Only	20.1	20.1	22.1	16.1
Thriller	16.1	20.1	22.1	22.1
Family Man	25.1	21.1	22.1	25.1
High Spirits	25.1	22.1	20.1	25.1
Shogun	25.1	20.1	16.1	20.1
Cloud Inspector	23.1	23.1	25.1	23.1
Sea Viper	25.1	23.1	25.1	25.1
Torrey Blundell	24.1	23.1	25.1	23.1
Thermon	23.1	21.1	22.1	23.1
Vengeance	23.1	23.1	25.1	23.1
Shelby Sue	40.1	40.1	40.1	40.1
Slingshot	40.1	25.1	40.1	40.1
Strike Force	40.1	40.1	40.1	40.1
Hammerhead	40.1	40.1	33.1	40.1
Reptile	40.1	40.1	40.1	40.1
Star Trek	40.1	40.1	40.1	40.1
Star Trek	40.1	40.1	40.1	40.1

Citrus Coral	25-1	28-1	28-1	28-1
Apache Star	20-1	28-1	28-1	33-1

Bowlegay	33-1	25-1	35-1	25-1
Katy Burrows	33-1	25-1	35-1	25-1
Powerful Situation	25-1	25-1	35-1	35-1
Sharp Shells	33-1	35-1	35-1	35-1
Amoroso	33-1	40-1	40-1	40-1
Artistic Storm	25-1	35-1	40-1	40-1
Artful Dream	40-1	40-1	40-1	25-1
Mr Paradise	33-1	40-1	25-1	35-1
Pinkie Of Paradise	40-1	40-1	40-1	40-1
Sam's Romance	33-1	33-1	40-1	40-1
Blind On The Run	33-1	33-1	35-1	35-1

Each way, a quarter the odds; places 1, 2, 3 & 4
C - Corst. H - William H. L - Ladbrooks T - Total

Newmarket - 3.30				
Horse	C	H	L	T
Deception Dream	2-1	7-4	7-4	7-4
Near	7-4	5-6	5-6	5-6
General Patrol	4-1	5-2	7-2	7-2

Newmarket— 2.15	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Debut France</td> <td>18-1</td> <td>2-1</td> <td>2-1</td> <td>2-1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Impressionist</td> <td>20-1</td> <td>8-1</td> <td>25-1</td> <td>9-1</td> </tr> </table>	Debut France	18-1	2-1	2-1	2-1	Impressionist	20-1	8-1	25-1	9-1
Debut France	18-1	2-1	2-1	2-1							
Impressionist	20-1	8-1	25-1	9-1							

Hops	C	H	T
Bradford	15-8	15-8	6-1
Redgate Sharp	3-1	3-1	7-8
Decorated Harp	4-1	9-2	9-2
Katol	8-1	7-1	8-1
Darts	8-1	8-1	9-1
Orsley Dudley	14-1	14-1	18-1
Armstrong	26-1	20-1	28-1
Orangeburg Old	20-1	25-1	28-1
Spring Warning	32-1	32-1	25-1
Michien	38-1	25-1	25-1
Sally Grange	38-1	25-1	25-1

Each way, a quarter the odds, places 1, 2, 3
C - Coral. H - William Hill. T - Total

LONGCHAMP - SUNDAY

3.20 **PRIX DE LA FORET (GROUP 1) €95,398 added** **Parade**
by Value €56,116

1	3222	ROUSSEAU REUNION (2) (C Bp)	Makdoun Al Makdouny J Gaudin (GB) 4 8 2 1 2
2	2035	OUTHERING (1) (C Bp)	Steven Hoadley Lady L C Johnston (GB) 4 9 2
3	3228	TOURNAI (4) (J R Gaud)	M. Johnston (GB) 1 1 1
4	3226	TOURNAI (4) (J R Gaud)	M. Johnston (GB) 1 1 1

7 3324 DANEKAYA (12) (C) (J F Gribomont) G Harrot 5 8 13 ... T Gillot

3	37642	RALDOU STONE 114 (M) (BF)	Jean C Girard	E Lottokov 3 0 0		
8	40070	DON'T WORRY ME (14) (C)	F J Gibbons	G Hannaf 5 6 3	T Thellett	
9	40082	DANESNAGA (42) (Hans & Ebraham)	A Falors 4 B 13		A Jenks	
9	40522	LINCHIE (97) (22)	(M E Fuzer)	A Falors 5 B 13	T Jarrett	
9	2-181	CLASSIC PARK (42) (7) (C)	(Warner Bros)	M H Wood 4 B 13	O Delaney	
10	-1465	CLASSIC PARK (42) (7) (C)	(Mills S Burrs)	A P O'Brien (4) 3 B 10	S Calverly	

- 10 declared -

BETTING: 7-2 Copacabana, 5-1 Palace Revival, Deceitocracy, 8-1 Tormis, 7-1 Kaldos Sam & Co
 Clipping Park, 18-1 James Don't Worry Me, 18-1 Danesnaga.

1. The first group of people who are not in the labor force are those who are not in the labor force because they are not in the labor force.

1. *Chlorophyll a* (Chl *a*)

Endurance test to bring out best in Motet

Many punters are still in the running for a valuable Autumn Double, while two Group One events bring horses of the highest quality to the Rowley Mile. Greg Wood studies the runners for the first Champions Day at Newmarket.

As promotional challenges go, there can be few more daunting tasks than to persuade any sane person that the miserable expense of Newmarket Heath in mid-October is somewhere they might care to be. Backslaps all round, then, for the executives in charge of organising the first "Champions Day" card on

the Rowley Mile, one of only two afternoons on the British turf - along with Derby day - when spectators can enjoy two Group One events. Add in the Cesarewitch, always one of the season's most popular handicaps, and suddenly even frost-hill would seem a fair price to pay for a place in the stands.

For many punters, in fact, the Cesarewitch will be the day's most significant race, and all the more so thanks to the success of Pasternak in the Cambridgeshire, the first leg of the Autumn Double, two weeks ago. Not only was Pasternak backed down to 4-1 in one of the gambles of the season, but he also figures in plenty of doubles linked in leading contenders in today's second instalment.

Bookmakers sitting on serious liabilities will still reckon

they have a fair chance of keeping the hat, however, since in the last 10 years alone, the Cesarewitch has been won at odds of 50-1, 33-1, 25-1 and 20-1, and only Vintage Crop, who took a small fortune out of the ring in 1992, has inflicted

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: At Large
(Newmarket 5.20)
NB: Suez Tornado
(Newmarket 1.40)

serious pain. They will take no chances, though, with Tip Cees, twice the Chester Cup winner, whose connections are not averse to a bet, while Henry Cecil's Canon Can, the Doncaster Cup winner, will also figure in most calculations.

Yet neither makes enormous appeal at relatively short

odds. Top Cees was ideally suited by the very soft ground at Chester in May, while Canon Can could finish only third in this race last year from 22lb lower in the ratings. In any case, there are others in the field who appear more progressive. Minnow, who has not stopped improving since moving up to extreme trips, is one, but MOTET (nap 2.55), who is a year younger and has just eight starts in his name, may have even more scope. Geoff Wragge's runner was an easy winner over this trip and off the same mark at Folkestone last time, and is developing into a very useful stayer. An each-way alternative is Turnpole, who seems to have been laid out for the race by Mary Rowley, a winner with Old Red two years ago.

The bare form of the Champion Stakes appears to point in just one possible outcome. Desert King, who has deserted this race in favour of the Breeders' Cup Turf, has the beating of Benny The Dip and Loup Sauvage on the basis of the International Stakes and Irish Derby respectively, but was in turn humiliated by Pilsudski in the Irish Champion Stakes. Michael Stoute's runner, who then finished second in the Prix de la Salamandre at Longchamp last month, which is the best form on offer today, but still may struggle to beat Tamarisk (3.30). Roger Charlton's colt might appear to have much less to offer, but his win in the Houghton Sales Stakes over course and distance three weeks ago was deeply impressive and he can move towards the head of the 2,000 Guineas lists with another victory today.

last six years, and may have found the candidate - talented, lightly-raced and improving - to give him a third in seven.

Fabre also saddles a prime contender for the Dewhurst Stakes in Xaar, whose sire, Zafonic, won the same race in such style five years ago on his way to classic success in the 2,000 Guineas. Like Zafonic, Xaar won the Group One Prix de la Salamandre at Longchamp last month, which is the best form on offer today, but still may struggle to beat Tamarisk (3.30). Roger Charlton's colt might appear to have much less to offer, but his win in the Houghton Sales Stakes over course and distance three weeks ago was deeply impressive and he can move towards the head of the 2,000 Guineas lists with another victory today.

E is for...



GREG WOOD
THE A-Z
OF BETTING

Each-way: A bet which does not require a horse to win, only to be thereabouts, and also as prime an example as you will find of the law of diminishing returns. Earlier generations of punters would have settled for nothing less than a quarter the odds a place whatever the race, but these days you will be paid at one fifth if your choice finishes second or third in anything but the tightest of handicaps. Changes to the rules have squeezed each-way betting to the point where the pips do not squeak, they negotiate for a formal surrender. These days, if you fancy a horse to run well without necessarily winning, there are two alternatives, one easy, the other difficult. Easy: back something else to win, rather than waste money on a place bet - perhaps a runner on the opposite side when you're not sure how the draw will work out. Difficult: don't back anything at all.

Early-Bird prices: A relatively recent development, and cunningly named to call to mind a hungry bird tugging away at a juicy worm in the first light of dawn. In fact, a phoenix would often be a more appropriate avian image, given the mythical nature of many morning-line odds. Although still a fine reminder of the need to search for value, these now seem to be little more than an early-warning system for bookies who have stepped out of line, as well as a source of fodder for the letters columns of the racing papers as frustrated punters recount how 12-1 became 6-1 within 30 seconds of opening time.

Easy to back: Instructive description of a horse which is drifting in the on-course market. Should you wish to support it, you will find the bookies more than happy to accommodate you - at which point any sensible punter will stop to wonder why a sharp-suited wide-boy with two kids at a minor public school and a mock-Tudor pile near Basilston should suddenly be so keen to give money away.

Eligible: Which you are on your 18th birthday, a year after the law allows you to drive, and two after it's okay to procreate. This is yet another result of the long-established official attitude to gambling - that it is a tatty enough business for adults to coexist in, so God - and Parliament - forbid that impressionable minors should

ever get corrupted. Despite this, strangely, a young person's inaugural visit to a betting shop has never been a cherished rite of passage, like their first smog, or that ill-conceived attempt to drink a bottle of Thunderbird in less than 10 minutes. But then it does not take long to realise that what looks like a tangible aura of licentiousness hanging over the door is in fact just a thick pall of fog smoke.

Exchequer, the By Rights, dour old Gordon Brown should be the biggest racing fan in the country, since the Treasury's share of the tax on all off-course bets amounts to some £350m each year. This compares to just £50m, less than one per cent of total annual betting turnover, which returns to the sport via the Levy. As Peter Savill, of the Racehorse Owners Association, never stops reminding us, prize-money levels in Britain are among the lowest of any major racing country, a situation which might be rectified if the Chancellor did not grab quite so much for himself. Then again, if the multi-millionaire Savill paid British tax like the rest of us, he might not have to.

Explanation: Would-be trainers learn to make excuses for a disappointing run almost before they discover which end of a horse bites, but an explanation is a little different. This is an official statement supplied by a trainer at the request of the stewards when a horse has performed unaccountably badly and, thanks to a sudden attack of *glamour* on the part of the authorities, a couple of years ago, it can also be published in the racing press. This last idea was one which, rather tellingly, the National Trainers' Federation was none too pleased about, since bleating about a horse causing a different trip or going tends to imply that the handler concerned does not have the first or faintest clue what he or she is doing.

French ambassador for the new generation

When he won the Cesarewitch a year ago today Royston French became the first black jockey to make an impact in British racing. Next he must break through another barrier and succeed as a senior rider.

If you had never met him before, you might think the name Royston French suitable for a fellow with blazer and cravat charmingly offering advice in a sportsman's showman.

The real Royston French is no snuff either and when he arrives at his race-track job of work there is always a suit encasing his burly body. French is 22 and different from his apprentice contemporaries. He rides with an American crouch they don't teach in Blighty. He is by far the most successful apprentice jockey operating in these islands today. And he is black.

It may well be that there are more black people involved in the committees of the Ku Klux Klan than in British racing, and in this respect Royston French offers far more than his precocious talent. It could be that his achievements will open up the turf to an untapped constituency.

Royston (weighing-room nickname "Tiger", after Woods) admits that during his formative years he characterised himself as a "girls' thing". He is not alone. "I think it's down to lack of knowledge about the sport," he said. "In athletics, for example, there are x-amount of black people in the sport but in racing there are very few."

"Obviously there are prejudiced people around, but in my sport I've not come across it. Everyone has been very helpful and supportive to me. It's not an issue as far as I'm concerned because the colour of your skin doesn't make you any better or any worse than anyone else."

French's ability, however, does set him apart. Unlike the peacock Oliver Skeete, who brought dreadlocks but little else to his equine pursuit of showjumping, French has more than novelty value in his corner. He is closing in on 70 winners for the season with a £1 level stake bettered by only one man in the top 15, the championship leader Kieren Fallon. Twelve months ago today he launched

BY RICHARD EDMONDSON

himself into racing's consciousness by winning the Cesarewitch on Incheilloch. The partnership attempt is to regain the title today. It is hard to believe that the only horse French knew until the age of 18 was the sensation he felt in his throat after shouting.

Royston French is the son of a Jamaican immigrant, who, until his recent retirement was a welder. The family home is in the Shropshire New Town of Telford, where 18th Century ironmakers produced the world's first iron rails, iron steam locomotives and, in 1779, the first iron bridge. Mr and Mrs French produced babies, 15 of them, of which Royston is the youngest.

Like the Waltons, there are

a lot of Frenches, but they're not quite as close. "To be honest, I can't remember them all," Royston said. "People often wonder about that, but 15 is a lot. I think Desmond is the eldest and he's about 40."

The most influential figure in French's life, however, is his uncle Errol. It was he who rescued a teenage Royston from jobs in a pallet-making factory and a garage where he cleaned and valeted cars. French now concedes he was probably not on the fast track to the boardroom. "Obviously there's no career or a future in dead-end jobs like that," he said. "My uncle wanted me to get into racing even though I didn't have any great knowledge of horses."

French, with uncle's support, obtained a place on the British Racing School's course in Newmarket. Fellow pupils may have considered him a piece of cultural exotica to start with, but it was not an impression that was to last. "Everybody on my course had been involved with horses before," French said. "I knew nothing. I'd had two pony lessons and I got run away with on the first and thrown on the second so it wasn't the ideal introduction."

Our tyro though made rapid, late headway and, by the end of the 11-week course, he was the victor ludorum, the recipient of the most promising student award. "I had to get my head down and work very hard to catch up with the rest," he said.

There is a lot of this talk of long labour in French's narrative. He is a karate brown belt and his thoughts appear to be part Grasshopper after tuition from the blind master and part Calvinist. "Every day is a challenge and you never stop learn-



French: 'I had to work very hard to catch up with the rest'

Photograph: Peter Jay

ing," he said. "For me, to get on in life, you have to be disciplined and try your best. If you don't put anything into life you won't get anything out. I work very hard."

French's travels now continue at the Newmarket yard of Luca Cumanzi, to whom he is apprenticed. If the young man ever gets intoxicated by the sweet smell of success it is soon replaced by an earlier aroma as he mucks out his three charges every morning. Men whose names are now in neon, such as Frankie Dettori and Jason Weaver, have been the previous callow incumbents at Bedford House and now French is about to embark on the dilap-

idated rope bridge that separates champion apprentices and successful senior jockeys.

Some, such as Richard Dacey, David Coates and David Dineley have fallen through the slats. French hopes to choose his path more carefully. "It's very difficult after you lose your apprenticeship and hopelessly the gunner will stick by me," he said. "I'll be one of the big boys until I lose my claim and then I'll have to prove myself all over again and it will be even harder this time."

Royston French, ostensibly, would have more tangible aspirations than most. He understands the politics of the game (the two puncture marks

in his left ear lobe are no longer decorative) and he understands that talent always finishes runner-up to application. His manners are what you would wish for in your offspring.

French is already one of the great technicians of his age thanks to extensive repetition on his mechanical horse. His switching of the whip from one hand to the other is considered one of the smoothest pieces of prestidigitation in the game. This afternoon he may have to use such trickery on the living fibre of Incheilloch. Only the time travellers know if he, like the old horse, is destined to become one of the notable stayers of British racing.

STRATFORD

HYPERION
2.30 White Plains 3.00 Fion 3.35 Monks Soham
4.05 Non Vintage 4.35 Anabarch 5.50 Supreme
Class 5.35 Viola Premiere

GORDON: Standard.
1. Left-hand course with 200yds run-in.
2. Course is SW of Stratford-on-Avon on A438. Stratford station 1m. Admissions: Club £15, Terraces £13. Centre of the course 24.
3. LEADING TRAINERS: O Nicholson 15 winners from 49 runners (30.6%), K Bailey 15-74 (20.3%), P Hobbs 13-66 (19.7%), G Bunting 10-64 (15.0%).
4. LEADING JOCKEYS: N Williamson 17-23 (25.3%), O Bridgwater 12-77 (22.6%), R Johnson 11-80 (16.3%), S Wymore 10-38 (23.3%).
5. FAVOURITES: 133-466 (33.5%).
6. BLINDFOLD FIRST TIME: Lady Margaretta (20.0).

2.30 SHOTTER MEADOW LADIES H'CAP
HURDLE (CLASS F) £3,000 2m 110yds
1. 21203 SHOTTER MOON (20) (2) F Jordon 5 11.1. Bailey J Jones (7)
2. 02222 DONT WINTER MICE (14) (2) P Hobbs 4 11.0. Polly Carter (7)
3. 22244 JONNET MARE (20) (2) J Jones 5 11.0. Caroline Spelling (7)
4. 31321 CAPTAIN MARGARET (7) (2) D Thorne 5 11.0.
5. 42222 DOWN THE YARD (20) (2) M Chapman 4 11.0. Panna Neill (7)
6. 02222 WINTER PLAINS (20) (2) K Bailey 4 11.0. Sophie Lillie (7)
7. 02222 A L J (20) (2) (2) O'Neill 4 11.0. Lorna Pugh (7)
8. 01122 MILLING BROOK (18) (2) M Bailey 7 10.7. Victoria Roberts (7)
9. 01122 SUMMER VILLA (11) (2) K Bailey 5 10.7. Ann Stoddart (7)
10. 01122 ROBERT SPECIAL (4) (2) D Thorne 5 10.9. M Woodall (7)

WOLVERHAMPTON

HYPERION
7.00 Fonteyn 7.30 Malozoa 8.00 Waypoint
8.30 Legal Issue 9.00 Dance To The Beat 9.30 Classic Ballet

GORDON: Standard.
1. Stallions 7-1. Outside: reminder - inside.
2. DRAW ADVANTAGES: High from 6-1 to 11-4.
3. Favourite: 133-466 (33.5%).
4. Course is N of town on A448. Wolverhampton station 1m. Admissions: Club £15, Terraces £13. Centre of the course 24.
5. LEADING TRAINERS: S Sanders 38-328 (21.1%), M Johnson 32-225 (23.1%), J Bailey 24-276 (23.6%), A Bailey 24-276 (23.6%).
6. LEADING JOCKEYS: S Sanders 38-328 (21.1%), M Johnson 32-225 (23.1%), J Bailey 24-276 (23.6%), A Bailey 24-276 (23.6%).
7. FAVOURITES: 300-200 (23.2%).
8. BLINDFOLD FIRST TIME: Wolverhampton: Passion (wrecked) (20.0) (10.0) (10.0), Golden Point (wrecked) (20.0) (10.0) (10.0), Blanche The Admon (wrecked) (20.0).

2. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
3. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
4. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
5. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
6. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
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8. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
9. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
10. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)

3.00 OXFORD SELLING HURDLE (CLASS G)
£2,500 added 2m 110yds
1. 30255 FLUOR (20) (2) J Jones 4 11.0. Panna Neill (7)
2. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
3. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
4. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
5. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
6. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
7. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
8. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
9. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
10. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)

3.35 WARWICKSHIRE HANDICAP CHASE
(CLASS C) £7,000 added 2m 5f 110yds
1. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
2. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
3. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
4. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
5. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
6. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
7. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
8. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
9. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
10. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)

7.00 MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES
(CLASS F) £3,000 added 3f 70yds
1. 02222 DONT WINTER MICE (14) (2) P Hobbs 4 11.0. Polly Carter (7)
2. 22244 JONNET MARE (20) (2) J Jones 5 11.0. Caroline Spelling (7)
3. 31321 CAPTAIN MARGARET (7) (2) D Thorne 5 11.0.
4. 42222 DOWN THE YARD (20) (2) M Chapman 4 11.0. Panna Neill (7)
5. 02222 WINTER PLAINS (20) (2) K Bailey 4 11.0. Sophie Lillie (7)
6. 02222 A L J (20) (2) (2) O'Neill 4 11.0. Lorna Pugh (7)
7. 01122 MILLING BROOK (18) (2) M Bailey 7 10.7. Victoria Roberts (7)
8. 01122 SUMMER VILLA (11) (2) K Bailey 5 10.7. Ann Stoddart (7)
9. 01122 ROBERT SPECIAL (4) (2) D Thorne 5 10.9. M Woodall (7)

8.00 HANDICAP (CLASS C) £7,325 6f
1. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
2. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
3. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
4. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
5. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
6. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
7. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
8. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
9. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
10. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)

7.30 CLYDE STAKES (CLASS F) £2,800
added 2f 70yds
1. 21203 SHOTTER MOON (20) (2) F Jordon 5 11.1. Bailey J Jones (7)
2. 02222 DONT WINTER MICE (14) (2) P Hobbs 4 11.0. Polly Carter (7)
3. 22244 JONNET MARE (20) (2) J Jones 5 11.0. Caroline Spelling (7)
4. 31321 CAPTAIN MARGARET (7) (2) D Thorne 5 11.0.
5. 42222 DOWN THE YARD (20) (2) M Chapman 4 11.0. Panna Neill (7)
6. 02222 WINTER PLAINS (20) (2) K Bailey 4 11.0. Sophie Lillie (7)
7. 02222 A L J (20) (2) (2) O'Neill 4 11.0. Lorna Pugh (7)
8. 01122 MILLING BROOK (18) (2) M Bailey 7 10.7. Victoria Roberts (7)
9. 01122 SUMMER VILLA (11) (2) K Bailey 5 10.7. Ann Stoddart (7)
10. 01122 ROBERT SPECIAL (4) (2) D Thorne 5 10.9. M Woodall (7)

3.45 WILLIAM HILL HANDICAP HURDLE
(CLASS C) £5,000 added 2m 3f
1. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
2. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
3. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
4. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
5. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
6. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
7. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
8. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
9. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
10. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)

4.35 PSM COMPUTERS HANDICAP CHASE
(CLASS D) £5,000 added 2m 1f 110yds
1. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
2. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
3. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
4. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
5. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
6. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
7. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
8. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
9. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
10. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)

4.55 WARWICKSHIRE HANDICAP CHASE
(CLASS D) £7,000 added 2m 5f 110yds
1. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
2. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
3. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
4. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
5. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
6. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
7. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
8. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
9. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
10. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)

5.05 CLAIRFOUNTEINE NOVICE HURDLE
(CLASS D) £4,000 added 2m 6f 110yds
1. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
2. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
3. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
4. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
5. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
6. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
7. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
8. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
9. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
10. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)

8.30 H'CAP (CLASS F) £3,000 1m 100yds
1. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
2. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
3. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
4. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
5. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
6. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
7. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
8. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
9. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
10. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)

9.00 SELLING STAKES (CLASS G)
22,500 2f 100yds 1m 100yds
1. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
2. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
3. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
4. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
5. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
6. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
7. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
8. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
9. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
10. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)

5.35 CHIPPING NOTTON MAIDEN HURDLE
(CLASS E) £3,000 added 2m 110yds
1. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14) (2) M S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
2. 01122 KING CURIAN (14) (2) S O'Connell 5 10.0. Panna Neill (7)
3. 01122 DONS OF THUNDER (14



The Oval has a long history of playing hosts to Australians, but in the autumn there is one fixture at the London cricket ground which is quite unlike any other occasion.

While an Ashes Test match can generate plenty of passion in an Oval crowd, it does not match the noise and colour of the annual Aussie Rules match for the Australian Football Cup.

Flags, banners and the chanting of team names are the order of the day for an event that has firmly estab-

lished a place for itself in the sporting calendar. This year's match, played last Sunday, featured Collingwood, one of the big names of Aussie Rules, against the West Coast Eagles. A crowd of 11,000 saw West

Coast enjoy an impressive 73-55 victory after taking a decisive 15-point lead in

the first quarter of the match. ■ Copies of these photographs — and any others by the Independent's sports photographers David Ashdown, Peter Jay and Robert Hallam — can be ordered by telephoning 0171-293-2534.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBERT HALLAM



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I bet Seaman's never heard that one before. I laughed until I hanged myself

CHRIS
MAUMESPORT
ON TV

Fictional football on television has always been tackled from behind by drama's eternal problem, suspension of disbelief: it has just never seemed real enough.

The *Munichers* was so far removed from actuality as to be little more than watchable wish. *Striker*, despite being based on Gary Lineker's Spanish sojourn, with input from Mr Nice Guy himself, never convinced (and was most memorable for Warren Clarke's up-and-under manager). *Eleven Men Against Eleven* was hilarious, and grappled forcefully with the evils of the modern game, but never aspired to be anything other than high farce.

Now there's Sky 1's new soap opera, *Dream Team*, whose brief is clearly to render as authentically as possible the travails of a modern football

club as it follows the decidedly mixed fortunes of perennial relegation candidate, Harchester United. It makes you wonder why no one has ever thought of it before.

In a recent BBC documentary about Chelsea's young aspirants, youth team coach Graham Rix was filmed handing out several severe dressing-downs, mostly to do with deficiencies in the housework department. It's all about attitude, application and professionalism – shockingly cleaned boots translate into slippiness on the pitch.

There's a scene in *Dream Team* that suggests they've done their homework (or at least watched the BBC film and taken notes). Harchester's Rix character, club stalwart Frank Patcham, is giving the talented but wayward Sean Hocknell a

talking-to for leaving a plaster in the shower plughole. The week before he had failed to mark his man at a corner and a goal had been conceded. "It's all about my favourite word, awareness," Frank tells him.

Harchester's spiritual home is in the relegation zone, but under their flash-git chairman they are investing in youth, and *Dream Team* focuses on five of the kids as they dream of glory, glory. A sensible move this, on Sky's part, putting at the heart of the programme a bunch of characters with whom the core audience – tooth-fall-mad lads – can identify.

In the quest for realism, Ron Atkinson and John Hollins have been drafted in to play themselves (though the idea of the archetypal Chequered book Charlie presiding over a vibrant youth scheme is a lit-

tle rum, he probably enjoys the irony). And Atkinson, in a phrase he often uses himself, does the business. He handles his team talk well, and he has a great spat with the chairman after they're knocked out of the Coca-Cola Cup by Chelsea.

The match footage itself is totally convincing – I'm not sure how Sky have done it, the secret probably being to use real film and eschew close-ups. However good previous efforts have been, on TV or in the cinema, they have always fallen down disastrously when it comes to action on the pitch.

There's an ensemble of characters all deftly portrayed, setting up a slew of dramatic possibilities of future episodes: Dean Hocknell, Sean's brother, who saved on his first-team debut in the Chelsea game; his girlfriend and Frank's daugh-

ter Lucy, football reporter for the local radio station; and Georgina, the little rich girl football groupie who has Dean on the boardroom table. It's well paced, too, with lots of short establishing scenes.

For all the attention to detail, there are a few slip-ups. At the beginning, for example, you hear Lucy on air talking about "Premiership strugglers Harchester United" – on local radio she would be much more likely to just say "United". Then when Chelsea go 2-0 up just before half-time, Big Ron immediately sends on young Dean – in reality, he'd probably wait until the interval. And Harchester is supposed to be a Midlands club, but there's not an appropriate accent within earshot. But to counter the few mistakes, there are a few nice touches of realism – Frank

Patcham and Big Ron both mouthing "fuck" as Chelsea score; Frank's aforementioned bollocking of Sean Hocknell; and the fact that Harchester lose to Chelsea despite Dean's goal – no Roy of the Rovers stuff there.

I have to confess that the idea of Sky doing a football soap did not have me agog with anticipation. In fact, I was looking forward to donning the metaphorical boomer boots and giving it a right good kicking. Sadly, I was denied. So thank God for Clive Anderson and his new chat show, *All Talk* (BBC1), the title of which is presumably intended to mean that all the talk comes from the irritating little man himself.

At the age of 19, Anderson's first guest, David Seaman, was playing for his dream team, Leeds United, the club he'd

supported since he was a lad. The dream became a nightmare as he became one of football's teenage cast-offs, albeit temporarily. This was one of the few actual facts about the Arsenal and England goalkeeper to come out of his appearance. As is usual with Anderson, it was merely a fusillade of scripted gags.

The halting lawyer seemed particularly preoccupied with the punning possibilities of Seaman's name. Of course, I hadn't realised, the audience hadn't realised, schoolboys the length and breadth of the country hadn't realised. The goalkeeper's surname spelt slightly differently means sperm. I bet Seaman's never heard that one before. I laughed until I hanged myself. I think I'll start a Clive Anderson Must Go campaign. I need your support. Now.

BASEBALL: WORLD SERIES

Cuban upstarts pitch for world domination

Tonight in Miami's Pro Player Stadium, a Cuban defector and rookie pitching star called Livan Hernandez will open hostilities in one of the most intriguing World Series in years.

Rupert Cornwell savours the feast in store for Channel 5 nightowls as the Florida Marlins take on the Cleveland Indians.

Once again baseball has delivered its annual October miracle. Come the play-offs and the lazy, hazy game of summer is transformed into the tautest sporting spectacle in America, where games, careers, even history turn on a single play. But this year the gods who determine these things have been especially generous.

This is a match-up that was not supposed to happen – certainly not at the start of the season, and not even at the start of the month. Atlanta versus New York or Baltimore, the money and the form book said. Yet in three marvellous League series Florida disposed of mighty Atlanta, and Cleveland topped first the defending champions, the Yankees, and then, most spectacularly of all, the Orioles.

Even now Baltimore must be wondering how they failed to win the AL pennant. All four of Cleveland's victories came by a single run, two of them in bizarre circumstances, and two despite epic pitching performances by the Orioles ace Mike Mussina, who gave up just one run in a combined 15 innings.

In a great series, the sixth and final game was greatest of all – scoreless until the 11th innings when Tony Fernandez

hustled a 2-41 pitch from Armando Benitez over the right-field scoreboard for the game's only run. Fernandez was only in the line-up because he accidentally injured the Indians' regular second baseman in batting practice a couple of hours before the game. "I felt bad. But I guess the Lord had a plan and he worked it out this way."

The Almighty has also smiled kindly on Jim Leyland, the manager of the Marlins. The best in the game, everyone used to say, except that he had never managed a club with the resources to prove it. Twice Leyland took the Pittsburgh Pirates close, in 1991 and 1992, only to fall at the final hurdle of the NL championship series, each time to the Braves. Only by selling their best players – Barry Bonds to San Francisco, Bobby Bonilla to New York – could the Pirates stay afloat. By 1996 Leyland had had enough. A new fangled team in Florida beckoned, bankrolled by the billions of owner Wayne Huizenga. Helped by the small matter of \$100m (£62m) invested in new players, Leyland within a year has taken the Marlins to the World Series, courtesy of a 4-2 NLCS triumph over, who else, the Atlanta Braves.

Already he has made history. The Marlins are the first wild card team to reach the final stage since the expanded three-stage play-off format was introduced for the 1995 season. And no expansion team has taken so short a time to reach baseball's supreme stage. Even the New York Mets waited 10 years before appearing in – and winning – the World Series in 1969.

And so to the cauldron of the Pro Player stadium tonight. This series is a clash of cultures: Sunbelt versus Rustbelt; the Hispanic élan of the *de facto* capital of Latin America against

Cleveland and its gritty East European stock; maracas against the prairie drums of Chief Waboo, leader of the Tribe.

The bookies make Florida favourites, at least for tonight's game one. But tradition at least points to Cleveland. Baseball lends to make its upstarts wait, and most neutrals would argue the Indians deserve their turn, after losing to Atlanta in the 1995 finale. On paper the team is weaker than two years ago, shorn of the electrifying outfielder Kenny Lofton and the home runs of Albert Belle. Both, however, were difficult players to handle. The Indians' clubhouse chemistry – so important a factor in coping with the pressures of the play-offs – has improved beyond recognition. "Quite simply, we believe in ourselves," says Matt Williams, Belle's replacement from San Francisco.

Most important, baseball is a game of streaks. These last three weeks Cleveland have been on fire. But streaks are made of luck as well, and maybe the Indians are about to run out of that commodity. If so, the Marlins are perfectly equipped to pounce. In slugger Gary Sheffield, they possess one of the game's supreme natural talents. Led by Kevin Brown and Livan Hernandez – "El Duque" to his legion of worshippers in Miami's Cuban exile community – Florida has a formidable pitching rotation.

Not least, World Series are places where historic circles are completed. At the Marlins, Leyland has been reunited with Bobby Bonilla, who rewarded him by batting in three crucial runs in the decisive sixth NLCS game against Atlanta. Against Cleveland the pair could go all the way. If so, for Jim Leyland's sake, all baseball would be delighted.



History in the making: the Florida Marlins celebrate in Atlanta after winning the National League Championship

Photograph: Ed Reinke/AP

Breaking into the food packs on crazy journey of 'Yellow Submarine'

A few days out from the finish of the first leg of the Whitbread at Cape Town. We are power reaching in a wind that's gusting over 40 knots and it's not really a time to get philosophical about life. I am wedged into the navigation station and still find it difficult to stay on the seat. It's a major effort to type even a dozen words as the computer seems to move crazily out of reach even though its fixed firmly to the bench by Velcro.

On deck, walls of water wash over the crew, flinging them the length of the deck. It's almost impossible to stay on your feet and there will be more than a few bruises to show for it at the end of this.

No one was able to sleep for one 24-hour period, so everyone was on deck the whole time except the navigator, Mike Quiller, and myself when I joined him for a council of war. I hope those safety harnesses hold.

We think about safety all

GRANT
DALTON

The skipper of Merit Cup had wanted wind. And now he has got it, he is not so sure, even though his boat is in second place in the Whitbread Round the World Race.

the time. Next to going fast, it's the only thought in our minds. And we have been going fast. Top speed has been nearly 30 knots with long periods over 20. It's just like being in the southern ocean, except that we were less than 30 degrees south.

There is so much water about that it's almost like being in a leaking submarine. In fact the Beatles song "Yellow Submarine" could be our theme song. It fits our colour scheme and most certainly

Merit Cup is surfing off huge cresting waves.

They look like the big ones in the Hawaiian travel brochures. I have seen a lot of waves and these are the biggest. We are not quite sure why they should be so large. However, these are the conditions we wanted for three weeks but now they are here I am not so sure.

For one thing there are the broaches, when the yacht careers out of control and up into the wind to be knocked flat on

its side with everyone hanging on. We have lost count of the number of times that has happened and it has cost us a spinnaker, ripped wires but now having to wait to be repaired because the sewing machine has packed up.

Paul Cayard, skipper of EF Language, is sailing a great race. His yacht's display has been truly remarkable. We are just over 100 miles behind him as I write this – and that will be a difficult 100 miles to reclaim. We could well need a major change in the weather to do it.

The forecast from here to the finish is that the wind direction will move around – but there could be quite a lot of it. There is a low pressure area in front of us and a high pressure area pushing in behind us. So we are getting squeezed in between them. That is why we are getting all this wind.

While we are keeping an eye on EF Language, we were also looking over our shoulder to Innovation Kvaerner. We need

to keep them out as well as trying to advance on EF. Were happy to be in second place, because the alternative at this time is third or worse. The name of the game is preserving our position and improving on it when the opportunity arises.

I wonder what is going through the minds of Lawrie Smith and the other skippers further back in the fleet. They will have written off leg one by now – unless they believe in miracles – and they will be thankful that the race will not be decided on elapsed time.

Who would have suggested even two days ago that we would put 100 miles on Dickson in 24 hours while we lost 35 on the race leader? That there would be 200 miles between third (Innovation Kvaerner) and fourth (Silk Cut)?

We have learned a few things since we sailed from Southampton on September 21. We know EF Language's

strengths. Kvaerner's too. They have probably learned a bit about us.

We have also learned that we have been a little too mean to ourselves with the food, even though we tend not to eat much in the tropics. Portions will be larger for the next leg. With the increased speed we calculate that we will be in Cape Town a day earlier than we expected only a couple of days ago, so we have broken into the food pack that was earmarked for Day 33.

We have decided it is important to keep energy levels high. When conditions are demanding there is no doubt that the guys perform better with more food.

On the warm legs we eat less and the work is not all that hard. But right now it's quite cold and the work is really hard. Some of the boys have been working on deck without a decent rest for more than 30 hours.

SAILING

Skipper's son loses finger in Whitbread accident

Campbell Field, the 27-year-old son of America's Challenge skipper Ross Field, has lost the top of his index finger in the first serious accident of the Whitbread Round the World race.

New Zealander Campbell, who is the American boat's designated medic, caught his finger in a pulley block on the mainsheet, the rope that controls the mainsail on the boat.

"Campbell is now resting in his bunk. He's all right but is suffering a bit of shock, so we are going through to the race office for some medical advice," his father said.

"It happened at about 10.30 at night. The seas were lumpy but there wasn't much wind, so Campbell was pushing the boom across, and as the sail eased out he got his finger caught in the main sheet block.

"Losing the end of a finger must be a family trait – I managed to do the same thing a couple of years ago."

While Ross Field skipped

the winning boat in the last Whitbread race, Campbell is a fully qualified skipper in his own right, and in 1995 was in charge of the winning boat in the Swan class World Championships.

While Campbell nursed his injured finger, America's Challenge was lying seventh in the 10-boat Whitbread fleet, now closing on the first-leg finish in Cape Town.

The leader, the Paul Cayard skippered EF Language, is 740 miles ahead of Field's boat, and 113 head of the second-placed Merit Cup. However, Cayard had run into lighter winds and was slowing, while Merit Cup and the third-placed Innovation Kvaerner, skippered by Knut Frostad, were picking up speed.

WHITBREAD ROUND THE WORLD RACE (first leg, 7,250 miles, Southampton to Cape Town) Latest positions: 1 EF Language (Swi) 740 miles; 2 Merit Cup (Norw) 627 miles; 3 Innovation Kvaerner (Nor) 513 miles; 4 Silk Cut (GB) 418 miles; 5 America's Challenge (US) 313 miles; 6 Swedish March (Swe) 213 miles; 7 Gullou (GB) 113 miles; 8 Gullou (GB) 113 miles; 9 Gullou (GB) 113 miles; 10 Gullou (GB) 113 miles.

Replacing genius: how England can cope without Guscott

Jeremy Guscott's latest brush with sporting mortality may have rendered Clive Woodward's dream ticket null and void but if he gets his midfield numbers right, England's new coach can still make rugby's selection lottery work to his advantage.

Chris Hewett believes fortune will favour the bold when the All Blacks, Wallabies and Springboks start asking the hard questions next month.

Clive Woodward has yet to pick his first England side, but this much can be stated without fear of contradiction: he looks a lot less daft in a baseball cap than his predecessor. If Jack Rowell was the Richard Ingrams of rugby selection - his abject decision to recall Roh Andrew as a panic measure against the Welsh last season could only have been applauded in the pages of *The Oldie* - Woodward talks so enthusiastically about "yoo!" development that it would be no great surprise if Janet Street-Porter attended next week's training run at Bisbarn Abbey.

Not that allegations of ageism could fairly be levelled at Woodward. His consistent line about "picking on form" is not so much a catchphrase as a mantra and when he says he will select the best player for each position "be he 19 or 39", he means it. However, the coach's four-year sojourn in Australia in the mid-1980s left an indelible mark on his rugby thinking and he has sent more positive signals to the new generation of England hopefuls in the space of a month than Rowell managed in three-and-a-half years.

What is more, circumstances have gifted Woodward a heaven-sent opportunity to back his instincts and reshape the one area of the national side in dire need of major reconstruction work. England's midfield axis has long been underachieving - Andrew, Will Carling and Jeremy Guscott rarely struck a simultaneous gallop, even when all three were in their pomp - and there were frailties and inadequacies again last season, as the Frenchmen Alain Penaud, Christophe



Alex King

Age: 20. Club: Wasps. Caps: 1

Born in Brighton and a graduate of Bob Reeves' remarkable rugby academy at Bristol University, King is a career outside-half with a degree in law and a doctorate in lines of running. A talented if inconsistent goal-kicker, his greater strengths lie as a prompter and string-puller for those around him. Perfectly suited to the modern handling game.



Will Greenwood

Age: 24. Club: Leicester. Caps: 0

Not so very long ago, a 6ft 4in rugby player boasting 15 stones of ballast would have been found in the second row rather than the centre. Greenwood poses a formidable physical challenge to any midfield but it is his state-of-the-art passing skills that take him into a different dimension. There are plenty of outsized, biff-and-bash centres thundering around in the Premiership. Greenwood is something else.



Mike Catt

Age: 26. Club: Bath. Caps: 23

A jack of all trades but, just at the moment, master of none. Catt has seldom expressed any desire to play in the centre but an ever-growing number of good judges believe it to be his best position. Brilliant at manufacturing opportunities for himself and an instinctive finisher, Catt has more of the Tim Horan than the Michael Lynagh about him. The quicker England recognise that fact, the better.

Lamaison and Stephane Glas demonstrated at Twickenham in March and the Wallabies underlined in Sydney four months later.

Guscott did not play in either match and the lesson was not lost on Woodward, who immediately felt-tipped the name of Bath's peerless centre on his teamsheet for the Wallaby return on 15 November. Now he must reach for the Tippec. Guscott, stricken by back problems and facing a stark choice between surgery and retirement, is out of the running and Woodward must rack his astute tactical brain for a different solution.

He should think and act progressively, wield the new broom, play Alex King at outside-half and pair Mike Catt and Will Greenwood at centre. It would be fresh, exciting and wonderfully unpredictable. Dangerous, too, in every sense of the word; a combustible blend of pace, strength, vision and youthful swagger that might occasionally blow up in English faces but, far more frequently, give opposition midfielders terminal doses of the heebie-jeebies.

Greenwood, still uncapped but a big hit with the Lions in South Africa during the summer, is the low-risk factor

in this innovative triumvirate: he is powerful, aggressive and utterly dependable. Deployed successfully as an outside centre during his time at Harlequins but switched inside by Bob Dwyer on joining Leicester, he is admirably equipped to perform the sheet-anchor role in midfield.

Most importantly, he is a master of the close-quarter pass. Greenwood forces opposition tacklers into committing themselves to contact, secure in his ability to work the ball into space from the tightest of corners. A centre partner blessed with explosive pace and an eye for the gap could cause untold

damage alongside him. That centre should be Catt.

Bath's resident South African is in danger of spreading his considerable talents too thinly. Bounced around since arriving at the Recreation Ground in 1992, he has played with unalloyed brilliance at full-back and outside-half, but only in isolated flashes. Instructively, it was during Guscott's prolonged absence in the 1993-94 season that he put together his most consistent run of performances. The position? Centre. Set free by Stuart Barnes, he fairly murdered high-class opponents on a weekly basis. Guscott was scarcely missed as Bath

completed the league and cup double.

All this depends on Woodward selecting a stand-off with one or two Barnes-like qualities. Paul Grayson, with all due respect, does not quite fit the bill, although he possesses a kicking game second to none. If England possess a play-making circus master with a rugby imagination rich enough to give the All Black back row a run for their money, he is currently plying his trade at Loftus Road.

According to Nigel Melville, the director of rugby at Wasps, Alex King is more than ready to take up residence in England's No 10 shirt - an

exclusive property badly in need of renovation. "He's nowhere near as left-sided as he was. He can kick off both feet without thinking too much about it and some of his recent performances have been exceptional," said the former England scrum-half this week. "He is quite obviously a player of international quality. Have no fears on that score."

"When Alex joined us last year, it was pretty plain from day one that he had the right qualities to go all the way. What he needed to work on was his reading of a game and that he has done, to a remarkable degree. He's a very intelligent

person, he listens and he learns. He runs angles that few other players even see, he is one of the top tacklers in a Wasps team that puts enormous store on defence and he is very, very calm. Would I play him this autumn? Certainly I would."

Assuming Tim Stimpson plays at full-back and starts as England's goal-kicker, the King-Catt-Greenwood hinge would give Woodward an enviable range of options in the marksmanship department. It also gives him a midfield with an average age of 24 and, therefore, a future beyond the 1999 World Cup. It is, as they say, worth a punt.

McGeechan faces bald facts of Saints' decline

The Allied Dunbar Premiership is back on centre stage this afternoon after a six-week experiment in European integration. As Chris Hewett reports, the return of domestic business is likely to be a real chore for two former international coaches.

It is almost exactly four months since Keith Wood, the phantom barber of Limerick, marked the Lions' triumph over South Africa by subjecting Ian McGeechan to a notoriously grotesque short back and sides. He need not have bothered. The trials and tribulations of coaching Northampton have left Britain's most celebrated

tactician in an advanced state of premature baldness.

The Saints are down on their uppers. Knocked out of the European Conference by Connacht last week and pointless in the Allied Dunbar Premiership following defeat by Harlequins and Newcastle. McGeechan's lukewarm band of under-achievers go into today's Midlands derby with Leicester as the rankest of rank outsiders. Worse still, they have more than a dozen players on the treatment table and three of their most prized foreign imports - Jonathan Bell, Jason Chandler and Shem Tatupu - are definite non-starters against the Tigers.

Tim Rodber, the Lions No 8, returns as captain, though. His recovery from hamstring trouble has been the one positive aspect of a thoroughly rotten few weeks in the East

Midlands and if Paul Grayson, England's goalkicking outside-half, passes a fitness test this morning, spirits will soar another few hundred feet.

"We haven't got time to mess around," said Rodber yesterday, fully aware that a third league defeat on the bounce would hurl his side with the unmistakable whiff of play-off fodder. "This is a hell of a game for me to come back to but we simply have to start winning. We have the ability but it's not coming out." If it fails to come out this afternoon, Franklins Gardens' lamentable decline from fortress to wendy house will be one step nearer completion.

Leicester, still howling hot and cold but clear title contenders for all their inconsistency, are at full strength. Joel Stranksy plays at outside-half with Leon Lloyd and Waisale

Serevi on the wings and Bob Dwyer, their ever-demanding coach, will expect a back division of that quality to make handsome amends for last season's 23-19 defeat in the corresponding fixture.

The fact that Alan Davies would be only too willing to swap places with McGeechan offers incontrovertible proof of Bristol's parlous position at the foot of the Premiership. The West Countrymen are as penniless as they are pointless and they are unlikely to find much solace at the Recreation Ground when they go eyeball to eyeball with Bath in the second of this weekend's four local derbies.

Davies, a former coach of Wales, has handed Alex Poole a league debut in the Bristol front row - the youngster goes in against the rejuvenated Victor Ubogu - while Craig Short gets the nod over the vastly ex-

perienced but under-performing Richie Collins at open-side. Andy Robinson, the Bath coach, is refusing to name his side until shortly before kick-off. Given that Bristol last won at the Rec some 16 years ago, Robbo is probably waiting for the results of complacency tests rather than fitness tests.

The remaining neighbourhood rumbles take place in London, where Richmond host Harlequins this afternoon and Wasps, the champions, welcome Saracens tomorrow. Richmond will field 10 internationals - they choose between their rival stand-offs, Earl Vaa of Western Samoa and Adrian Davies of Wales, this morning - and have earmarked the game as a "must win" affair, especially as Quins have lost Thierry Lacroix, Laurent Cabannes and Massimo Cuttitta to Latin Cup duty.

McIntosh free to face Llanelli following ban

European rugby takes a break this weekend but the after-effects will still be felt in Welsh rugby's Premier Division.

Dale McIntosh, the Pontypriid No 8 who was sent off and banned for his contribution to the battle of Brive, has completed his 30-day suspension and returns for the Welsh League champions in their home game against Llanelli.

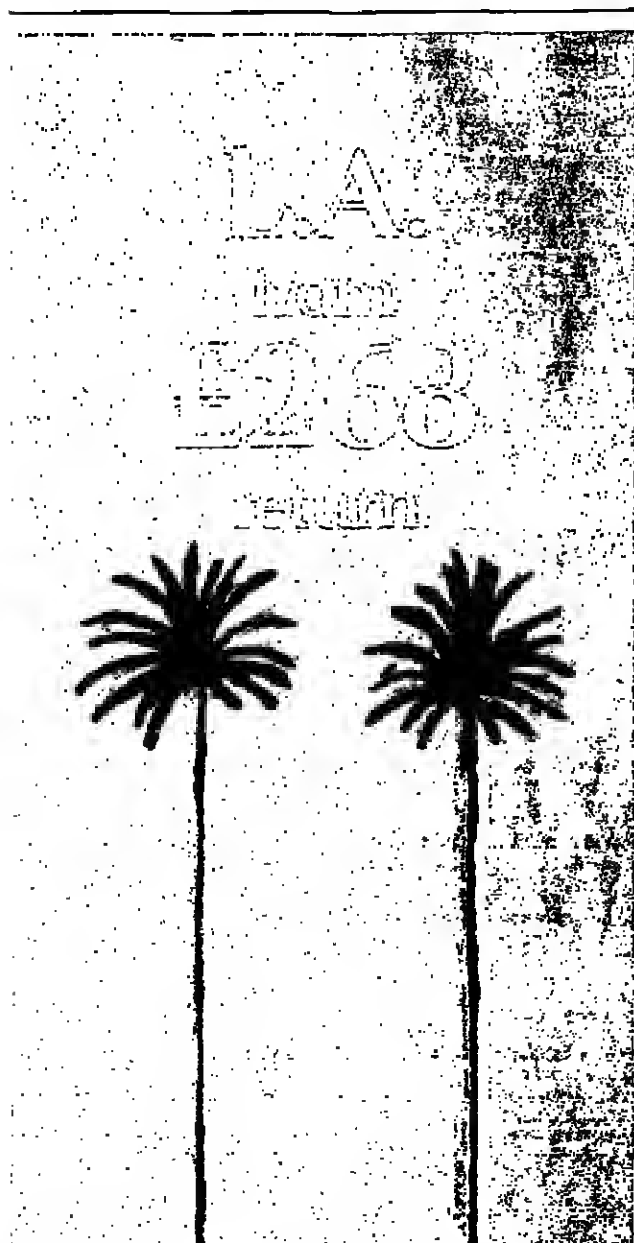
McIntosh, who went before the European board on Tuesday to answer a disreputable charge after his thumbs-up to the Brive crowd, admitted that he was relieved to escape with a sharp reprimand. "I really feared I was going to get another ban or at least a fine," he said. "Thankfully they accepted my explanation that the gesture wasn't meant to be inflammatory. I just tend to put my thumb up a lot, that's all."

McIntosh will be hoping his thumb is pointing the way towards the top of the table after tonight's live televised match.

Liam Botham, on loan from West Hartlepool, could be in contention for a place in the Cardiff team to play Bridgend after impressing in a friendly against Caerphilly on Tuesday. "I've got a month here and the main thing is to do enough to win a contract," he said.

Bridgend have taken the captaincy away from the Welsh international Gareth Thomas, who wants to leave the club, and given it to Matthew Lewis.

The other two Premier games are derby games, Ebbw Vale playing Newport, and Swansea taking on Neath.



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ALLIED DUNBAR PREMIERSHIP TEAM NEWS

Bath v Bristol

Bath coach Andy Robinson is keeping his line-up under wraps until this morning. Powerful Argentinian hooker Federico Mendez successfully came through a midweek comeback match following serious shoulder trouble, and could feature, but England's Mark Regan would relish an opportunity against his former club. Bristol's loose-head prop Alex Poole makes his league debut. Veteran Welsh international flanker Richie Collins is dropped, giving way to the promising Craig Short but another veteran, lock Phil Adams, returns after injury. Bath have won all 14 league encounters with Bristol.

Northampton v Leicester

Northampton's coach, Ian McGeechan, mightering the changes, given Saints' European Conference failure against Connacht which deprived them of a second successive tournament

quarter-final appearance. The groin injury of Leicester's Scottish wing Craig Johner again keeps him out. Northampton have lost their last three home league games but they did beat Leicester at Frank's Garden last season.

Sale v Newcastle

Injuries have ravaged Sale with scrum-half Kevin Ellis, wing David Rees, centres Jos Barendse and John Devereux and flanker Dylan O'Grady, heading a lengthy casualty list. Centre Matt Taylor plays against his former club. Newcastle, the league leaders, are without flanker Richard Arnold (hamstring), meaning a likely back-row trio of Peter Walton, Pat Lam and captain Dean Ryan. Prop Paul van Zandvoort faces a challenge from the fit-again George Graham. Newcastle are seeking their ninth successive league win while Sale have lost four of their last five league matches.

Richmond v Harlequins

Lion Barry Williams returns to the front row after missing Richmond's defeat at Saracens through injury, and is among 10 internationals on parade. Harlequins' French internationals Thierry Lacroix and Laurent Cabannes, together with Italian prop Massimo Cuttitta, are involved in the Latin Cup. Richmond's unbeaten home league record stretches back to January 13, 1996 but Harlequins are chasing a fourth successive league away win.

Tomorrow

Gloucester v London Irish

Gloucester prefer Neil McCarthy to England reserve hooker Phil Greening while Latin Cup commitments rule out Philippe Saint-Andre with Audley Lumsden deputising and former club captain Dave Sims starts his first league game

of the season following ankle surgery in the summer. After their victory over Stade Francaise in Paris last weekend, London Irish hope to field an unchanged team. Gloucester are chasing a 10th home league win from the last 11 starts, but Irish did win 10-9 at Kingsholm four years ago.

Wasps v Saracens

Rola changes see New Zealander Mark Weedon and Scotsman Andy Reed in the second row for Wasps. Saracens have England international scrum-half Myran Bracken back for his first league game of the season. Harlequins are the only side to win a league match at Loftus Road, and the defending champions have won seven out of eight league fixtures against Saracens. In compiling a 100 per cent Premiership record Saracens have won five successive league games for the first time since 1994.

.....

It was then that they built up a daunting 26-point lead.

The first boost for the Broncos was that their captain and scrum-half, Allan Langer, started the game after battling against a groin injury for the last fortnight. The fact that he also finished the 80 minutes without any obvious problems means that Australia will be certain to pick him for their tour, subject to any reaction settling in over the weekend.

Only three minutes into the game, Darren Lockyer, who will be the latest in an outstanding line of Australian full-backs against Great Britain in a couple of weeks, spotted a gap from dummy-half, kicked

Langer, Walters and Steve Renouf simply shipping the ball past an outflanked back line.

Facing humiliation, they dug deep and found the resources to resist and, after one promising attack had broken down, scored through Nick

That turned out to be a short-lived theory. Brisbane had soaked up everything they had to offer and, in the last five minutes, scored tries through

If some of Hunter's stars of recent weeks, like Scott Hill and Brett Kimmorley, failed to fire, then the collective determination that had brought this far against all the odds was still obvious.

Brisbane Broncos: Lockyer, Devera, Penout, D Smith, Sailer, Walters, Langer, Gee, Plett, Webcke, Talles, Thom, Ryan. Substitutes used: Hancock, Lee, Walker, Carroll.

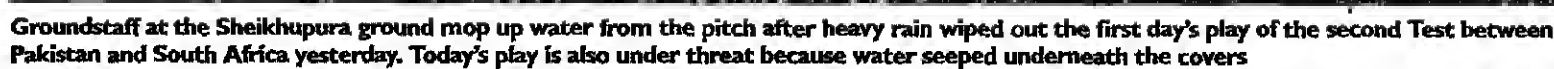
Hunter Mariners: Ross, Zist, Godden, K Iro, Carlew, Hill, Kimmorley, Brann, McCormack, Stone, Doherty, Marquett, T Smith. Substitutes used: Maddison, Swain, Beauchamp, T Iro.

Rafarua: G Emmesley (Sydney).

Simon Pack, the ECB's international teams director, stressed: "The England and

The A trip also gives England an opportunity to call on players who are already match-fit should any injuries arise in the West Indies rather than bringing out replacements who have not played for several months.

– Myles Hodgson



Photograph: Muzammil Pasha/Reuters

• **DR. COLMAN**

Gayle, 33 next month, returned to his Nottingham birthplace this season to play National League basketball for

Riders signed a sponsorship deal this week and their coach, Bob Donewald, said: "Garnet is a confident man who fits in with the maturity of players we already have like James Havrilla, Billy Singleton and Gene Waldron. Garnet brings fire to the

He made his original Leicester debut in November 1987 and had four seasons with the Granby Halls club. Gayle spent two seasons with the Sheffield Forgers in the National League before they graduated to the Budweiser competition in 1994 to become the Sharks.

The hopes of the England

Several players from that game will be in Nemeth's 12-man squad, who assemble that night in London before leaving for a friendly in Germany the

A meeting between the English Basketball Association and the League failed to resolve the conflict of interests. Mark Hannen, of the EBA, said: "We both recognise the need to help the national team but it was too late in this instance because of the TV considerations."

— Richard Taylor

Liz McColgan has shaken off a virus in time to pursue the Great Caledonian run title in Edinburgh tomorrow.

McColgan won in her debut race two years ago and the 10-kilometre event will probably be her last race before her next target, the Tokyo Marathon, on 30 November.

The 1991 10,000 metres world champion ran a personal best 10-mile time of exactly

Now she is aiming to finish with a victory before she leaves for her training base in Gainesville, Florida, on Thursday.

McColgan said: "After Sunday's race my sights will be firmly set on Tokyo and next year's London Marathon."

Athletics

The World Cross-Country Championships, scheduled for Belfast in 1999, will go ahead despite the announcement this week by the British Athletic Federation that it was bankrupt and was putting its business in the hands of administrators.

League 1 1st: Sheffield Wed 1 Everton 4; Stoke 1
Blackburn 0 (at Newcastle 2wly); First Division
Grimsby 0 Coventry 2; Middlesbrough 0 Port
Valley 2; Second Division: Hull 3 Doncaster 2. **Avgn**
Attendance Combination First Division: QPR
0 Arsenal 0 (at Harrow Borough); West End 2
Brighton 0 (at Northwood); Tottenham 1 Nor-
wich 1 (at Spurs Lodge, Chiswick). **French**
League: Monpellier 2 (Banc 32; Rayville 39)
Misc 2; Gungamp 0 Bordeaux 1 (Ricard 75)
Italian Cup Third round, first leg: Milan 3 Samp-
doria 2.

GROUP 4: Zimbabwe 2 Spain 1 (T. Johnstone 70, M. Martin 74, M. McNulty 70, J. Gerrids 70, N. Price Retired lost to MA Jmenez); New Zealand 3 South Korea 0 (S. Allger 75, M. Joang-kyung 83, M. Long 75, K. Kim Jong-duk 78, F. Noble 88, K. Kang Wook-soon 70)

	P	W	L	Pts	Wins
New Zealand	2	2	0	2	5
Zimbabwe	2	2	0	2	4
Spain	2	0	2	0	2
South Korea	2	0	2	0	1

Los Angeles	7	3	26	5
Edmonton	2	5	17	21
San Jose	1	2	9	11
Anaheim	0	4	2	12

Ice skating

THURSDAY'S LATE RESULTS: Schafer Memorial competition: Women's short program: 1 T Kvitelandsdal (USA) 55pts; 2 Z Jones (GB) 50; 3 Chen Lu (CHN) 45. Top combined standing of the Ice Dancing competition: 1st R.D. Brown

months World Open in Malaysia, which he has elected not to play.

EGYPTIAN OPEN (Alexandria) Semi-finals: Jansher Khan (Pak) bt P Nicol (Scott) 15-8 12-15 15-11 15-10; J Power (Can) bt D Harris (Eng) 15-9 15-12 15-3.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK

Tennis
CZECH INDOOR MEN'S ATP TOURNAMENT
 (Ostrava) Singles, second round: S Ullrich
 (Cz Rep) bt J Krosiek (Slovak) 6-4 6-2; M Nor-
 man (Swe) bt S Bruguera (Spa) 6-4 6-7 7-6; G
 Henkel (Croat) bt B Ullrich (Cz Rep) 7-6 6-2.

V WILLEMS (US) bt A Huber (Ger), default.
MARLBORO CHAMPIONSHIPS (Hong Kong)
 Round Robin: Red Group: S Draper (Aus) bt
 V Spedden (US) 6-1 6-3. Gold Group: B Back-
 er (Ger) bt J Stark (US) 4-0 6-4 6-3.
LTA WOMEN'S CHALLENGER (Southamp-
 ton) Quarter-finals: E Koulikovskaya (Rus) bt

1225 kgs was set in Yangzhou in July of this year by Chinese Wang Yanmei. The mark and total records of 155.0 and 160.0 kgs were set by Chinese Li Yajian in Melbourne in November 1993.

The number of different languages that the guide book to next summer's football World Cup finals will be printed in. The guide book for the last finals, held in the United States in 1994, had editions in Thai, Japanese and Chinese.

	P	W	L	Pts	Wins
United States	2	2	0	3	5
England	2	1	1	1	4
Argentina	2	1	1	1	3
	3	0	2	0	0

Ice hockey
NHL: Dallas 4 Florida 0; NY Islanders 5 San Jose 2.
EASTERN CONFERENCE

Today's Order of Play: 11am S Davis (Eng) v D Dale (Wai); D Harold (Eng) v J Burnett (Sco). 3pm M Williams (Wai) v M Stevens (Wai). 6pm C Newman (AUS) v R Gooden (AUS).

Cragnoletti said the next time I came to Italy would be on holiday. And he was right, be-

● "He looked like a pint of Guinness running around in the second half." Gas-

100

D

Glenn Hoddle, England's coach, on the Christian Vieri

First in Pa

Quarterbacks

Q E D
Q P D
First in Paperbacks

My display on the wing in Kathmandu made Sir Alf adopt 4-3-3



THE GAFFER TAPES

Dramatic news from the Old Cornfield where the chairman has given me permission to enter the chase for Paul Gascoigne. I've already spoken to his agent's brother's gardener and he tells me we've a very good package.

I think we've covered all the bases. He can go fishing on Sir Hiram's private lake whenever he wants. Deirdre the tea lady is lined up to be his personal counsellor. Jimmy Five Bellies is to be given a grace-and-favour flat above the Mop & Bucket where they are going to install a dentist's chair in the tap room; and he'll be allowed to straighten all the dressing-room towels before a match.

I know there's no way the others can compete with that. Stan Collymore's contract stipulates that only he can be towelled man at Villa Park while Duncan Ferguson is Everton's

counsellor and Alan Sugar hasn't got a lake.

It'll be good to sign him as I've had a bad week. I was late getting back from Rome having been arrested for swimming in the Trevi Fountains. I kept telling them I was innocent, that I was merely trying to wash Paul Ince's blood off the jacket I'd lent him at half-time. This followed the embarrassment of Saturday morning when Glenn and I went for a quick prayer at St Peter's. Apparently you aren't allowed in wearing shorts. Glenn seemed very nice about it. He said he'd just make it a quick prayer so I wouldn't have to wait outside for long, so I don't think it was related to the team bus leaving me behind at the ground after the game.

With the carabinieri bashing heads outside that made for tricky journey back into Rome. I eventually wangled a lift on

the back of Angelo Di Livio's scooter hut, sad to report, he was still a hit wound up and I actually ended up in the Trevi fountain when he took objection to my singing "Three Lions" as we drove past. It could have been worse, I could have got a lift with Christian Vieri. The poor fellow took a wrong turn and found himself making a very hairy journey down the Spanish Steps.

If that wasn't bad enough I got back to find I'd been snubbed by the FA. They launched a new book, "England: The Official FA History", and invited a few has-beens and never-weres like Trevor Brooking and Ray Clemence to promote it. Not a mention of my six minutes for an FA XI against Nepal in 1964. That was a seminal performance. Sir Alf told me himself if he hadn't seen my display on the wing that night in Kathmandu he

would never have adopted 4-3-3.

Of course, I realised afterwards why I wasn't mentioned. The book's been brought out by Virgin - well, you might find me looking at a book of virgins but not in one.

I've had to take training all this week as Kit Mann, my assistant, has been away on a special mission. After hearing about Spartak Moscow having to replay their European match with Sion because their crossbar was too small, I've sent him round to measure the goals at all the clubs we've lost at this season. He could be away some time.

While he's absent I've taken the opportunity of removing Howard Wilkinson's picture. When we went on that coaching conference a couple of weeks ago there was a picture of Wilkinson in the goodie bag. He's Kit's hero so he's

put it up in the boot room. I haven't got used to it though. I was convinced those staring eyes were following me around. I'd come back from training and there'd be a voice saying things like "Have you worked on their ball skills? Are they fit enough? Is their shape right? Do they have kippers for breakfast?" It was driving me mad.

On top of everything else we've had the police round. One of the YTS boys has been nicked for trying to steal the ticket dispenser at the meat counter in Tesco. He claims Sir Hiram asked him to pinch it after the physio decided to set up a queuing system in the treatment room following an unfortunate incident.

Meanwhile Shaun Pronic is out with an injured hand and Ivor Niggle has an bruised jaw.

Barry Gaffer was talking to Glenn Moore

SIDELINES

Foot on both sides of Mersey divide

Irrevocably red by political conviction, Michael Foot was a true blue during his pre-war days on Merseyside.



In a poetic poem to Everton the future Labour leader even spoke of "God's lesser breed of men at Liverpool". So where does that leave the rare breed who crossed the divide between today's derby foes?

Stanley Park may be all that separates Goodison Park from Anfield, but barely two dozen players have had a foot in both camps. Unless you count Michael Owen, whose dad Terry played for "the other lot", or Steve McManaman and Robbie Fowler, both boyhood Evertonians like Ian Rush. Home captain Dave Watson is the only man involved in this afternoon's duel with dual experience.

Howard Kendall transformed Alan Harper and Kevin Sheedy from Liverpool reserves into title-winners with Everton in his first reign. In his second he relieved Graeme Souness of Peter Beardsley and Gary Ablett. Johnny Morrissey and David Johnson had previously made the same switch, as did David Burrows (via West Ham), with only Steve McMahon (via Aston Villa) reversing the trend.

The last period of such localised transfer activity came more than a century ago, when Alex Latta and Fred Geary blazed a trail from Everton to Liverpool. Jack Balmer followed it in 1935, just as Foot was being moved to verse, and went on to become the first player to score a hat-trick in three consecutive matches. Poetry in motion, you could say.

Ten things Coventry's Bermudian Kyle Lightbourne might be missing



FAR FROM HOME

- 1 Bermuda's national library, which will proudly reopen after refurbishment, fumigation and replenishment. It only has 115,000 books, but that is still 1.05 for every Premiership spectator at Highfield Road this season.
- 2 The future that might see a McDonald's built on Bermuda next year after the Prohibited Restaurants Act 1997 was challenged in court this week.
- 3 A dark 'n' stormy. Rum and ginger beer.
- 4 Gombey dancing, which appears to be a rabble jumping up and down - much like Coventry's playing style.
- 5 Bermuda chowder - fish hits, peppers, parsley, garlic, curry powder, Worcestershire sauce, celery, Ketchup and carrots.
- 6 Reliance on the luxury tourist trade for a living.
- 7 The pace of life. Bermuda has a 20 mph speed limit, a legal maximum of one car per household and relies on mopeds.
- 8 Golf. Bermuda is the most densely coursed (eight in 22 square miles) country in the world.
- 9 Wreck-diving. (Although the Sky Blues tend to dive down the table looking fairly wrecked come springtime).
- 10 The triangle.

NAME OF THE GAME No 5: ARSENAL

Formed in 1886 by workers at the Royal Arsenal in Woolwich, the club's first name was "Dial Square", which was the name of one of the workshops at the state munitions factory. The name was changed to "Royal Arsenal" later that year and to "Woolwich Arsenal" in 1891. "Arsenal" was adopted in 1914 after the club moved north of the Thames to their present Highbury home.

THIS WEEK

On 18 October 1972, Crystal Palace manager Bert Head made the headlines with a "staggering" bid for two Swindon players, Don Rogers and Rod Thomas. In a week when Palace have been linked with a possible £4m bid for Paul Gascoigne (not to mention weekly wages estimated at around £40,000), the sums involved 25 years ago seem small.

However, one report at the time said: "Head, who has already spent a staggering £275,000 on three players this season, is ready to write another huge cheque for the pair." His £225,000 offer for the duo was not successful, although he did later sign Rogers.

THIS WEEK'S TRANSFERS

TRANSFERS: David Hirst (forward) Sheffield Wednesday to Southampton (£2m); Stale Solbakken (midfielder) Lillestrom to Wimbledon (£250,000); Richard Gough (defender) Kansas City Wizards (US) to Kansas City Wizards (US); Ivano Bonetti (midfielder) unattached to Crystal Palace (week-to-week contract).

HISTORY LESSON

England's Champions' League teams will both need some Dutch courage next week. While Manchester United entertain Feyenoord, Newcastle United travel to PSV Eindhoven.

Newcastle have met Dutch opposition only once before in European competition, when they beat Feyenoord 4-2 on aggregate in the first round of the Fairs Cup - forerunner to the UEFA Cup - 20 years ago.

It was the start of a memorable campaign. After victories over Sporting Lisbon, Real Zaragoza, Setubal and Rangers, Newcastle went on to win the competition by beating the Hungarians of Ujpest Dozsa 6-2 on aggregate in the final.

LOANS/TRIALS: Dougie Freedman (forward) Crystal Palace to Wolverhampton Wanderers (one-month loan); Kevin Muscat (defender) Crystal Palace to Wolverhampton Wanderers (one-month loan); Markus Munich (midfielder) Bayern Munich to Newcastle United (one-week trial).

Contributors: Phil Shaw, Nick Harris, Paul Newman
Readers' contributions welcome. Send to Sidelines, Sports Desk, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL

Italy in the grip of a bout of self-doubt

If there is one thing Italians like to do more than revel in a great footballing victory, it is wallowing in the misery of a great footballing opportunity missed.

Andrew Gumbel reports on a week of post-mortems, recriminations and fear for the future after the Italy's 0-0 draw against England in Rome.

It doesn't seem so long ago that the Italian side was brimming with confidence about their prospects for the World Cup. Arrigo Sacchi, the abrasive and unpopular national coach, was sent packing at the beginning of the year, and in his place came a gentleman and a shrewd tactician, Cesare Maldini who quickly masterminded a victory over England at Wembley. Italy had Zola, they had Baggio, they had Ravanelli. What on earth could go wrong?

Well, the Italians now know what did: too many draws against sides, like Georgia, that they should have beaten even on a bad day, and not enough punch against the real adversaries in their group, most notably England, who undoubtedly got the best of a tense, if goalless, draw in the Olympic Stadium in Rome last Saturday night.

Rubbed up against the humiliating reality of having to go through the play-offs to clinch a place in France next year, the Italians - both the team and the country at large - have been doing some hard thinking this week. Is the problem Maldini? Or is it one or more of the players? Or pure bad luck?

Most outspoken in the immediate aftermath of the England match was Gianfranco Zola, who complained that he had been forced at the last minute to play in an unfamiliar position, just behind the front line of attack, and thus had his considerable talents wasted. Was this Maldini's big mistake? Apparently not: it now emerges that Zola told his coach the same



Man in the middle: Cesare Maldini, who cut a lonely figure against England, has not been widely blamed for his team's failure Photograph: Empics

night not to believe anything he read in the next day's papers. The two of them had agreed on Zola's position days in advance, and the Chelsea striker sounded off to the press merely to take some of the heat off what had undoubtedly been a disappointing personal performance.

Such devout, media management actually served to distract attention from Italy's real problem, in midfield. This was where England showed their superiority most decisively, and where the Italian side are most sorely lacking. All it took was one early injury (to Paolo Maldini) and the Italian middle was floundering. As the authoritative football writer Gianni Mura assessed: "It's worrying when a

northern European midfield runs rings around us... If we don't have Albertini, or Di Matteo, or Baggio, all of a sudden we're on red alert. So it's not Maldini's fault if our midfield isn't producing miracles."

Maldini himself referred to the problem too. Many of the most accomplished midfielders playing in the Italian league game are foreigners, he noted, giving him limited choice for the national side. Overall, Maldini insisted that his team had nothing to regret: true, they were outclassed on the night, but on the other hand they gave nothing away.

One man who has dissented strongly from that view is international's newly acquired

Brazilian star, Ronaldo. "I think Italy will qualify for the World Cup," he said, "but if they carry on playing the way they are now they won't even get through the first round. The Italians played very badly and in very disorderly fashion."

Asked about Maldini directly, Ronaldo laid the sarcasm on thick. "He's got great problems. In Italy there are so many good players that it's very hard for him to pick and choose."

Overall, however, the press and public have tried not to pin blame on anyone in particular. Instead, they have been gripped by an uncharacteristic sort of panic - the fear that Italy really may not be as good as they always thought they were. The

latest Fifa classification figures, published this week, appeared to bear this out, rating Italy a lowly 16th on the world scale, alongside Morocco - as low a showing as Italy has had since the figures were introduced four years ago.

The loss of national confidence manifested itself all too clearly in the draw for the play-offs. On Monday morning, the Italian papers were saying they'd be happy with any side except Yugoslavia. By Monday evening, with Russia the country pulled out of the Fifa hat, the line had changed to: we'd have been happy with any side except Yugoslavia or Russia.

Italy remain the favourites to pull through the play-offs and qualify for the World Cup, and

are certainly considered the toughest possible opponents by the Russian players, but you certainly wouldn't know that in this most football-obsessive of countries. Italy is beset by stage-fright, and won't overcome it until a good couple of balls have found the back of the Russian net in Moscow on 29 October. Seeking to convey the mood after the England game, one newspaper, the *Corriere della Sera*, borrowed a line from Malcolm Allison uttered after Manchester City were knocked out of the FA Cup by Fourth Division Halifax: "Losing this game may not be the end of the world, but it certainly feels an awful lot like it." A lot of Italians right now would say amen to that.

Brazilian fans fail to show Corinthian spirit as bus wars break out

BRAZIL

This sort of thing just does not seem to happen in England... late on Tuesday night, on the outskirts of São Paulo, a coachload of Corinthians fans blocked a motorway, then ambushed and stoned the bus of their own team as it was returning from a game.

The Corinthians midfielder Neto said that, after forcing the team bus to stop, the fans attacked it with sticks and stones, following the team's 1-0 defeat away to Santos.

"For the first time in my life, I was scared," Neto said. "There were enormous sticks and enormous stones everywhere. I was afraid of dying." Corinthians fans have become increasingly restless with their team's campaign in the Brazilian League. Despite a

host of expensive new signings, Corinthians, one of the biggest clubs in Brazil, are 21st in the 26-team league and only goal difference separates them from the relegation zone.

The fans used the coach in which they were travelling to block the road. The Corinthians' coach driver refused to open the door and the fans dispersed when police arrived. The team bus was given a police escort onwards.

GERMANY

A funeral company has begun offering coffins in the colours of Germany's Bundesliga clubs - if fans want to stay true to their favourite team even after the "final whistle," as the company puts it.

The Aborn company, which has 80 outlets nationwide, said



AROUND THE WORLD BY RUPERT METCALF

it came to the idea when a fan of Bayern Munich demanded that his coffin be painted in team colours.

HUNGARY

Thousands of fans are set to miss the first leg of the World Cup play-off between Hungary

and Yugoslavia because of an unfortunate venue switch.

The vital qualifying match on 29 October will now be played at Ferencvaros' Ullői Út stadium (capacity 17,700), as the much larger Nép stadium (capacity 76,000) is being renovated for next year's European Athletics Championships.

The Yugoslav football federation has received over 10,000 inquiries for tickets, but its Hungarian counterpart said that only 1,350 tickets would be made available to visiting supporters.

RUSSIA

The Russians are also having problems with the venue for their World Cup play-off first leg against Italy on 29 October. Last weekend, when Russia beat Bulgaria 4-2 in a World

Cup qualifier, the pitch at Moscow's Luzhniki stadium cut up disastrously in its first big match after a £1.25m stadium renovation. "During this major reconstruction we somehow forgot about the turf quality at Luzhniki," Moscow city council's chief engineer, Vladimir Sorokin, said.

The Russians will now stage their encounter with Italy at the 51,000 capacity Dynamo stadium - where the pitch is also far from perfect but, as a Russian Football Union vice-president, Alexander Tukmanov, said: "It is still better than Luzhniki's turf."

ARGENTINA

Argentinian footballers have threatened to strike over doping rules which last week condemned the Independiente

SECRET

Wise's fear of the law proves to be the beginning of wisdom



Dennis Wise: 'Zola, Vialli, Hughes, they're all legends, and I'm so lucky to be playing with them' Photograph: Robert Hallam

When he was a member of the Crazy Gang Dennis Wise revelled in his image as a cheeky Cockney chappy who was always in the thick of the action. And he continued to live up to his wild reputation when he left Wimbledon for Chelsea.

Then a policeman inspired him to close the door on his wild side, and now he is in the thick of the international class action on view these days down the Fulham Road. He is loving every minute of it.

Ruud 'Gullit' is lounging on a chair, Gianfranco Zola is looking at the food on offer for lunch at the Chelsea training ground, and Gianluca Vialli is showered, dressed, and waiting, somewhat impatiently, for his friend to join him.

Dennis Wise looks up to the shaven-headed Italian. "Baby, I'm busy," he says, with a mock accent. "I won't be long. OK?" Vialli gives an exaggerated, Latin shrug of his shoulders and sits down to wait for the club captain to finish talking to me.

"He's a legend," Wise says quietly, leaning over the table to ensure that Vialli doesn't hear him. "And he's such a perfectionist." At that moment Mark Hughes walks by, which sets Wise off again. "I can't believe Manchester United let him go, either. He's been phenomenal."

If Wise sounds a little disbelieving at the position he finds himself in, then it is because he is. The 5ft 6in bundle of energy still can't quite work out how, week in, week out, he plies his trade alongside some of the biggest names in European football.

"Zola, Vialli, Hughes, they're all legends, and I'm so lucky to be playing with them all. It'll be nice when, later on, I have kids to tell them that I used to play with those guys. They probably won't believe me, so I'll have to show them a video." Maybe, I suggest, Zola will tell his children he once played with Dennis Wise? He laughs. "No, I don't think so."

The facts, however, tell a different story. Throughout the season so far the Chelsea manager, Ruud Gullit, has operated a squad system, which has seen the big names in and out of the team, willy-nilly. All that is, except Wise who, up until his current, three-match League suspension, played each week, despite the fact that the press reported, only last season, how he and Gullit were at loggerheads.

"I couldn't understand why I'd been dropped," he explains. "Ruud said that my English mentality was different from the Italian mentality he was introducing to the club. When English players get dropped they tend to sulk, like I did, but the Italians are so relaxed. Once it's been explained to them, they accept the manager's decision."

"Ruud outlined to me, and to the others, that to win anything in football these days, you must use 20 players, not 11. Everyone now accepts that we won't be playing in every game. I know I have been up to now, but I understand that I'm bound to be dropped on some occasions this year."

Maybe, but his form has been so consistently good all season that, despite Eng-

land's continuing success, a powerful lobby has been pushing hard for Wise's inclusion to add to his 13 international caps. As for Wise, he does not really know what else he can do. "Everyone keeps saying I should be at least in the England squad, but it means nothing to me unless I am."

"I watched the match against Italy like everyone else and, of course, I'm delighted we've made it to the World Cup. I've now got to make sure that I do as well. I'm playing at my best right now, and have been since the start of the season, so if Glenn won't pick me now, I can't see how he will in the future. I suppose I've just got to carry on, and if Chelsea have a successful season it can only help my cause."

Wise has actually helped his own cause most of all. His career, up until recently, has been anything but quiet. As a Wimbledon player it was his free-kick that set up Lawrie Sanchez to head home the only goal in the 1988 FA Cup final against Liverpool. "He wasn't supposed to be even in the box," Wise recalls. "It was supposed to be Alan Cork. To this day I don't know why they swapped."

A £1.6m move to Chelsea followed in 1990, but for most of his time in football he has attracted the wrong kind of headlines, culminating in his infamous fracas with a London taxi driver that saw him convicted of assault and causing criminal damage.

In March, 1995, he was sentenced to three months in prison. He ended up

BY IAN STAFFORD

spending just two hours inside a cell, before he was released on bail pending an appeal which, three months later, saw him acquitted. But those two hours proved to be the turning point in Wise's career and, indeed, life.

"My whole attitude to life has changed, and it's all down to the incident with the taxi driver, and the consequences," he says, quite prepared to discuss the sorry subject. "Going to prison is an experience I am never going to forget."

"I remember walking to my cell with a prison officer and I asked him if I could sit outside. I just couldn't get it into my head at all. He said, 'No, you're in custody.' I asked him again, and he refused. Then he shut the door on me."

Wise had nothing to do except sit down on a small bed and look at the four walls that surrounded him. "It was very frightening. I sat down and wondered how on earth I had ended up there. Then I started to look at myself, and to think about life."

"Believe me, two hours is more than enough to sort yourself out. I realised how much I loved playing football, but how I shouldn't take it for granted. It gave me a huge kick up the backside. I clearly needed it."

He blows his cheeks out and, for a moment, the cheeky chappy grin deserts him. "I've mellowed a lot since that experience, I can tell you, both on and off the pitch. In a funny sort of way I'm glad it happened to me. It's put me in good stead, both for now, and for the future, when my career's over. And it's made me really enjoy my football."

He looks around the training ground refectory at his team-mates. "You can't help but look good when you're playing with them," he adds. "I just love playing for this club. It's not about the money, or the fame, or anything else except the football. If I wasn't a professional footballer, I'd still be out playing the game on some park every Sunday morning."

The new Dennis Wise happily coincided with the new-look Chelsea, courtesy of first Glenn Hoddle, and then Gullit. "When I came here Chelsea were a sleeping giant. Not much changed for the first few years. We remained a mid-table side. Then Glenn arrived, and he inserted a lot of discipline and professionalism to the club. Even little things, like introducing the canteen, and laying down carpets downstairs helped. It made us feel special. And, of course, he signed Ruud."

"I'm in my eighth season here now, and we've only just won something. The sleeping giant's just woken up, and I'm hoping it's the start of great things to come. Certainly, lifting the FA Cup last year was my greatest moment."

What was that like? Wise's eyes light up. "It's the most wonderful feeling possible," he answers. "When I was handed the cup, I just waited a split second and looked completely around the stadium first before lifting it up above my head. It gave me such a buzz. Being second up the steps for Wimbledon was good, but raising the cup for Chelsea was incredible."

Does he miss those rather wild days at Wimbledon? "Nope, not at all. They were great days, of course. Nobody was on big money, but we enjoyed the crack by upsetting all the odds. But we were always the underdog and I always wanted to move because they would never reach a higher level. My ambition was always to play for a big London club. That's why I was never going to stay there."

Now he is playing for a big London club that shares his ambitions. "I want to win the League, the Cup-Winners Cup, and get my place back in the England team," Wise said. "And I'm playing for the right club to do all of this."

He looks across at Vialli again. "You know, reputations don't count for much here, either. We all have a great laugh. When Italy beat us at Wembley, Zola and Di Matteo turned up for the next training wearing their Italian shirts. They then made a point of jogging round the pitch taking the mickey out of us all."

"Well, this time we got our own back. We've put loads of messages up in the dressing-room, like 'We're off to France,' and 'Italy are Crap.' The guys had a laugh with us. That's what it's like here."

As Wise made his way off to the Motor Show with Vialli, I told him that he must have changed if, during the well-documented fracas last month in the Old Trafford tunnel between Manchester United and Chelsea players, he was acting as peacemaker.

I added that the thought of Dennis Wise upholding the peace was akin to Oliver Reed complaining about a rowdy drunk. He takes my point. "Yeah, well it can happen sometimes in the game. But I know what you mean. I thought to myself 'What am I doing?'"

Would he have tried to cool things down a few years ago? The cheeky grin appears. "No," he said. "Probably not. I would have been in the thick of it."

Swans still waiting for a saviour

FAN'S EYE VIEW

No 228
SWANSEA
BY
ANDREW CLEMES

Popular myth has it that the Welsh as a race are pessimistic in outlook. The supporters of Swansea City have more justification than most to harbour doubts and fears about their future. Even our newly appointed chief executive felt we must be the most long-suffering fans in the League and a glance at Swansea's immediate past shows how right he was.

A huge sigh of relief swept across the Vetch in August when the reign of the Sharpe family ended and an eager group of new directors took over. The relief was twofold as a previous takeover had collapsed and the club has a crumbling ground, having existed hand-to-mouth for

many years. In contrast to the dead hand of the Sharpe years we were thrilled to hear of money for new players, a new stadium and a top to bottom review of the club. This review was to be the petrol in the groundman's mower to the manager himself.

To say that Jan Molby was the idol of the North Bank was an understatement. He had not only almost achieved the impossible and saved us from relegation in 1995 but had taken the Swans to Wembley and to within a whisker of promotion in the play-off final. This was exciting (if heart-breaking) stuff. Optimism was high for the new season although then the "imminent" takeover seemed as far off as Welsh rugby's next golden era. In the meantime the vital organs of the 1996-97 team were transplanted to Watford, Northampton and, most painfully of all, Cardiff.

It will all be different under the new regime we assured ourselves - no more asset-stripping. On its first day in charge the new board promptly sold striker Steve Torpey to Bristol City for £400,000 and bought two League of Wales players for £60,000. The cheque book has only appeared once since. The only crumb of comfort has been the

form of one of the new signings. Tony Bird, who, in fairness, has done what no Swans striker has since the glory days of Bob Latchford and made the "highest scorer" rankings in the Sunday papers.

The fans' suffering was increased with a home defeat to Barry Town in the Welsh Cup and the inevitable sacking of Molby. In one fell swoop the Swans lost their best manager since John Toshack and one of the most successful managers outside the Premiership. Saviours have come and gone, and once we even had six all in one season, yet hoped the Great Dane would be with us forever.

As if by magic a new redeemer appears within 24 hours of the "unplanned" sacking of Jan the Man. The unfortunate man is Mickie Adams - rejected by Fulham and promising to do for Swansea what he did at Craven Cottage.

If he does that then, fickle bunch that we are, we will reverse him and the loss of Molby will be a distant memory. We are still tantalised by blueprints of our new stadium and talk of yet more players if Adams wants them.

Being Welsh and pessimistic we wait patiently while wondering, in the words of the Pet Shop Boys, what have we done to deserve this?

How Kenny was persuaded that it's good to talk

Cesare Maldini had a bad week thanks to Glenn Hoddle, but the England manager didn't exactly do much for the mood at Nosedé, either. They must have been high-fiving after England's Roman victory given that the popularity rating of the man currently endorsing their cereal matched that of Tony Blair's - until news of the collapse of Hoddle's marriage soured the celebrations.

Problem was, the advert for Shredded Wheat played on Hoddle's image as a family man, and Nestlé have understandably pulled the ad, which cost them at least £2m more than Brian Little is reportedly prepared to fork out for Gazza. But it's no good crying over spilt milk; Nestlé will probably look for a replacement whose image fits their bill, and chances are they'll look within the game.

Three years BH (Before Hoddle) they paid Jack Charlton to try and convince the watching millions that he was taking a suitcase of Shredded Wheat out to USA 94, while Old Big Ead himself was their icon during the 1970s, in the days when his opinion still mattered.

Back then only a handful of footballers suited the ad men's spec. Clough was one; he plugged everything from East Midlands Electricity to Choc-

late Buttons, and even had Bryan Robson starring (badly) alongside him in a cereal ad. Lawrie McMenemy was another - on the strength of one FA Cup win and the ability to crack the odd one-liner. He plugged the alcohol-free lager Barbican in an ad which was so bad it must have driven tee-totals to drink, while Kevin Keegan stripped to the waist in a boxing ring with Henry Cooper to enthuse about "splashing it all over"; Brut 33, that is.

Nowadays, of course, things are somewhat different, with any old Tom, Dick or Harry - or Alan, Ryan or Gary - popping up on our screens during ad breaks. Or even Scott. For those with short memories, the star of the 1994 McDonald's ad was the then 13-year-old Scott Parker, who had to play keepy-ppy for six hours while the ad was filmed; it obviously didn't do his balls skills any harm because he made his Charlton first-team debut this season.

Parker says he was paid "not millions, not even thousands" for the role; the big stars can command anything up to £100,000, unless the endorsement is written into their contract. But money, apparently, is not really the point. The point, according to Chris Palmer, advertising director of Gorgeous



OLIVIA BLAIR

ON WHY FOOTBALLERS AND AD MEN MAKE STRANGE BEDFELLOWS

Productions and the creative brains behind the Littlewoods ads, is that "advertising reflects what's 'happening' in the world, and football is 'happening'". He says we can expect to see an increasing number of footballers plugging anything from insurance (Ron Atkinson) to cars (David Ginola) as the build-up to France 98 gathers momentum. It doesn't seem to matter that they can't act. David Platt's performances for Tic Tacs, and later for McDonald's, were as unconvincing as his displays in Arsenal's midfield have been, while Alan Shearer lacks a certain sparkle in the current

ad for Lucozade Sport. Palmer admits Shearer is "no Lawrence Olivier, but he works round that". Apparently.

Nor does it seem to matter that star and product are as compatible as Thomas Brodie and George Graham. OK, so Ryan Giggs wears Reebok boots, but I doubt he uses an Acclaim computer or drives a Citroën, and you can bet your bottom dollar he doesn't go for a Quorn burger after training. And as for Terry Venables drinking Oasis fruit drink... something bubbly would be more apt.

As usual, Nike's commercials take some beating, even if the brilliant Parklife ad (featuring Cantona, Wright, Fowler and Seaman playing park football on Hackney Downs) did lose out to the WH Smith ad starring Nicholas Lyndhurst in the recent National Television Awards. Nike just do it better than the rest, although Gary Lineker did wonders for Walkers crisps, and Vinnie Jones has doubtless had a similar effect on the sales of, er, Vaseline Intensive Care deodorant.

Palmer claims that he'd like to make an ad with "anyone" in football because it's currently so commercially viable, but there must be exceptions. Gerry Francis and Howard Kendall can't

even sell the likes of Justin Edinburgh and Nick Barnby, let alone decent products.

But at least someone has finally persuaded Kenny Dalglish that it's good to talk. The Newcastle manager has succeeded Bob Hoskins and Maureen Lipman as British Telecom's latest star. Next thing you know, Ray Wilkins will be endorsing Vidal Sassoon products. Ray Parlour will be championing Clearasil and Barry Fry will be promoting savings schemes.

Of course things can change quickly in football - as Nike found after putting their millions behind Cantona before his infamous kung-fu kick - and there's always a danger that the actions of a player or manager can adversely affect the sales of the product they're endorsing.

But it's unlikely ever to be a problem for Scott Parker, whose potential has nothing to do with the fact that he once helped boost sales of Fillet-O-Fish. Parker may end up being a marketing man's dream, but only because, as those in the know at Charlton claim, he's "two-footed, attack-minded, supremely fit and the ultimate pro". In other words, he's got the proverbial world at his feet. So, as they say in ad speak, watch this space.

Derby day dynamics complicate sack race form guide

After disappointing Coca-Cola Cup exits in midweek, both Gerry Francis of Spurs and Everton's Howard Kendall need convincing performances from their sides as the Premiership returns.

Phil Shaw looks at the weekend ahead, while Nick Horis (below) analyses the programme match by match.

To reverse an old maxim, the managerial sack race is a sprint, not a marathon. The odds against Howard Kendall or Gerry Francis making it to middle distance may shorten drastically if they run into fresh difficulties this weekend.

Given the disparity between expectation and achievement at Everton and Tottenham, it is perhaps surprising both have survived until late October. Last season had not even reached the starting blocks when Bruce Rioch was ousted at Arsenal. Howard Wilkinson lasted only marginally longer before Leeds lost patience.

Francis himself owes his job to Ossie Ardiles' dismissal three years ago next month, days before Kendall's predecessor, Joe Royle, replaced

Mike Walker. Now the manner of their exits from the Coca-Cola Cup has fuelled fresh dissent. Yet while Spurs face a hiding-to-nothing tomorrow against Sheffield Wednesday, Everton have the ideal opportunity to whip up a backlash.

The visit of Liverpool is one occasion when the partnership of the Goodison Park faithful is unqualified. Beating the Reds takes precedence over protest, and Kendall's team go into action knowing that the approach which led to Royle to joke about his "dogs of war" has knocked Liverpool out of their stride so successfully that Everton are unbeaten in seven derbies.

Liverpool's discomfort in the face of such aggression was

a major factor behind the purchase of Paul Ince. A week after the blood, sweat and tears of the Olympic Stadium, England's captain rejoins the fray at a venue where the gratitude will be grudging at best after more than a century of rivalry.

Though the fixture between Crystal Palace and the leaders, Arsenal, has less than three decades' history, it has already developed an intense internal dynamic. Players and managers come and go, but Palace's inferiority complex, born of just two wins and six draws in 22 meetings, is passed on like a baton.

Their last victory over the Gunners at Selhurst Park was in 1979. They have not won at home for six months while Arsenal have not lost away since

Sunderland on 11 January, or anywhere other than Salonica since May. Palace to win, then.

World Cup Super Saturday appeared to come at a bad time for Derby. Nevertheless, a squad scattered around the globe reconvened smoothly at Spurs in midweek and today put a run of eight wins in nine to the ultimate test against Manchester United. Last season Jim Smith's team prised four points from the champions, and can consider themselves contenders if they repeat the Old Trafford triumph of April.

Meanwhile, the English game's Italian battalion suddenly find their mortality exposed. Gianfranco Zola, outstripped in the dedication stakes only by Dennis Berg-

kamp, will at least be among friends as Chelsea seek to put a sequence of four points from 12 behind them at home to Leicester.

This is another contest where the past, albeit recent, will exert a presence. On Leicester's last appearance at Stamford Bridge, for an FA Cup replay in February, they were undone by an erroneous late penalty decision. Mike Reed, who made it, is booked in for a quiet afternoon at Everton, though he is, intriguingly, down to take Leicester's next home game.

Elland Road tends to treat most visitors as if they were referees with a vendetta against Yorkshiremen, so the reception afforded to another of last weekend's heroes will be re-

vealing. Newcastle's David Baty, the first of Howard Wilkinson's dream-team midfielders to leave Leeds, will be the only native of the city on the pitch.

Ian Rush may be less warmly received on his return but will be unperturbed as he strives for his first league goal since January. However, with Rod Wallace already up to seven - one fewer than his tally last season - George Graham can claim vindication for marginalising a player who hit 36 on Monday.

While Newcastle hover in mid-table, with games in hand that could put them top, Blackburn might be sharing the leadership if they beat a Southampton side reinforced by England's great lost No 9, David Hirst. Roy Hodgson, whose in-

sights into Serie A's finest filled endless column inches last week, has taken to Lancashire as if Internazionale and San Siro were mere stepping stones to his true destiny.

The anniversary of Ray Harford's demise next week will be a reminder that Ewood Park had to wait until November for last season's opening victory, and compared with that kind of start the embattled Spurs manager may appear to have few worries.

But with Arsenal perched on the Premiership summit and their own side 14th with one goal to show for six Premiership matches, White Hart Lane regulars could be tempted to add insult to Francis' back injury in the event of another failure.

Aston Villa v Wimbledon

Yorke 3 Leading scorer East, Court 4
Last season: 5-0

Aston Villa will be without Stan Collymore, who is beginning a three-match ban imposed after he was dismissed following a fight with Bolton's Andy Todd on October 4. Brian Little may return to the two-man attacking formation of Dwight Yorke and Savo Milosevic. Steve Staunton (knee) is likely to return after missing the midweek 3-0 Coca-Cola Cup defeat at West Ham. If Staunton is ruled out when England Under-21 star Riccardo Sonecra is set to retain his place in a three-man central defensive formation.

Wimbledon will be without young striker Jason Euell, who will be out of action for five weeks after dislocating a shoulder during Wimbledon's 2-0 Coca-Cola Cup third round defeat at Bolton Wanderers in midweek. The 20-year-old was due to see a specialist last night to assess the damage. Dons manager Joe Kinnear faces a striker shortage as he is also without Jon Goodman, who is facing an operation for cruciate knee ligament damage, while Dean Holdsworth left Wimbledon for Bolton recently.

Blackburn v Southampton

Sutton 10 Leading scorer Davies 6
Last season: 2-1

Stuart Ripley may return to the first team today after playing in a reserves match on Thursday. Stéphane Henchoz should be cleared to play despite being left concussed in the midweek Coca-Cola Cup defeat at Chelsea. Tim Sherwood and Lars Bohinen should return, along with Kevin Gallacher and Jeff Kenna. Striker Chris Sutton did not train yesterday because of a groin complaint, but that was mainly a precaution and he is likely to be fit. Jason Wilcox is still suspended, while defenders Chris Coleman and Marlon Brown, returning from injuries, are given extra time to recover. Southampton will be without Matt Le Tissier, who damaged a thigh muscle during the 2-1 Coca-Cola Cup victory at Barnsley in midweek. Yesterday's record £2m signing David Hirst may go straight into the team. Strikers Egil Olsen and Mike Evans are both doubtful with ankle problems. Either Hirst or Stig Johansen will partner Kevin Davies in attack. Manager Dave Jones will wait to see if Dutch defender Ken Monkou can recover from a leg injury and start.

Chelsea v Leicester

Vulliamy 5 Leading scorer Marshall 4
Last season: 2-1

Kevin Hitchcock will be in contention to start in Ruud Geurts' side. Hitchcock's goalkeeping rivals Dmitri Khazin and Ed De Goeij saw him save a penalty in the 4-1 Coca-Cola Cup shoot-out win over Blackburn on Wednesday night - his first appearance for eight months. Eddie Newton and David Lee will also come into contention for their first Premiership starts of the season, while Graeme Le Saux and Gianfranco Zola are likely to return. Celestine Babayaro, the Nigerian international, could make his Premiership debut. Dennis Wise is suspended and Gustavo Poyet (cruciate ligament) is out. Leicester will be looking to recover from the midweek 3-1 Coca-Cola Cup exit at the hands of Grimsby that saw their defence of the trophy prematurely ended. They should be boosted by the return of midfielder Muzzy Izet and defender Pontus Karmark, and Emile Heskey may play a part after recovering from a groin strain. But Gary Parker (thigh), Steve Walsh and Ian Marshall (groin) are still unfit.

Crystal Palace v Arsenal

Lombardo 3 Leading scorer Bergkamp 11
Last season: No fixture

Steve Coppell is likely to include Italian Ivano Bonetti in his squad. The former Tranmere Rovers and Grimsby midfielder has been signed on a non-contract basis. Coppell will be without Douglas Freedman and Kevin Muscat, who have joined Wolverhampton Wanderers on loan. Neil Emberton (hamstring and knee) could return to Palace's defence, possibly alongside Andy Linington. Simon Rodger may also make a comeback. Palace captain Andy Roberts (shin) faces a late fitness test while Bruce Dyer is fit and should play up front with Paul Warhurst. Luis Boa Morte may have his first Premiership start after scoring twice in the 4-1 Coca-Cola Cup win over Birmingham. Dennis Bergkamp, Tony Adams, Steve Bould, Nigel Winterburn and David Seaman (who will equal Jack Kelsey's 352 goalkeeping appearances for Arsenal) should all be recalled. Dutch winger Marc Overmars and French midfielder Emmanuel Petit were both injured playing for their countries last weekend but Petit has recovered. Ray Parlour (thigh), Lee Dixon (groin) and Patrick Vieira (ankle) are other doubts.

Derby v Manchester United

Baino, Wrench 6 Leading scorer Sheringham, Solskjaer 3
Last season: 1-1

Jim Smith, whose side have won all of the six matches they have played at their new Pride Park Stadium, recalls Italian striker Francesco Baiano, who was rested for the midweek 2-1 Coca-Cola Cup win at Tottenham. Baiano, who has scored six goals this season, will renew his attacking partnership with Costa Rican international Paulo Vanchope, who scored both goals against Spurs. Captain Igor Stimac and winger Stefano Erario were both missing with injuries in midweek and are unlikely to return today. Danish defender Jakob Laursen has recovered from a groin strain.

Alex Ferguson is likely to make 10 changes from the side that went out of the Coca-Cola Cup 2-0 to Ipswich in midweek. Peter Schmeichel, Gary Neville, Henning Berg, Gary Pallister, Denis Irwin, David Beckham, Nicky Butt, Ryan Giggs, Teddy Sheringham and last season's top scorer, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, are all likely to return. David May is also back in contention. It is the first time this season that Ferguson has had his three strikers - Sheringham, Solskjaer and Andy Cole - all available at the same time.

...And statistics

Balancing youth and experience

When Arsenal face Crystal Palace at Selhurst Park today there will be no doubt as to which side will have the edge in terms of experience. While Arsenal's Wenger's multinational team have enjoyed far greater exposure at the highest levels of the game than Steve Coppell's Premiership newcomers, there is also a substantial gap in the average ages of the two sides.

Arsenal, with an average of 25.4, have been fielding the oldest team in the Premiership this season, whereas Palace's is the second youngest at 23.5.

Both Arsenal, who lead the Premiership, and Chelsea (average age 25) have shown the benefit of experience this season, although oldest does not necessarily mean best. Manchester United (26.8) and Liverpool (26.7) are among the younger teams and indeed Liverpool fielded the youngest Premiership side for a single game this season (average age 24 and two months) when they beat Aston Villa at Anfield last month.

The oldest

was the

Chelsea

team (average

age just over

30) that

opened the

season at

Coventry.

Perhaps the

most surprising

aspect of the

figures is the

narrowness of

the age

range. There is

only three years' difference

between Arsenal, the oldest

team in the

league, and

Derby County, the

youngest.

At 40 years old, the

Coventry goalkeeper

Steve Ogrizovic is the

oldest player to start a

Premiership match this

season.

While Derby (26.4) boast the youngest team based on the season overall, Everton have been sending out an even younger side in recent weeks. With Neville Southall (35) losing his place to Paul Gerrard (24) and the Goodison team also including three teenagers - John O'Shea, Danny Cadamarteri and Michael Branch - the average age of the Everton team has dropped to 25.3.

Southall is the second oldest player to appear in the Premiership this season - another goalkeeper, Coventry's Steve Ogrizovic (40), is the oldest - while Liverpool's Michael Owen (17) is the youngest.

Age ranges

Team	Average age
Derby	26.38
Crystal Palace	26.59
Liverpool	26.72
Leeds	26.75
Manchester United	26.79
Aston Villa	26.80
West Ham	26.80
Tottenham	26.83
Southampton	26.93
Leicester	27.14
Barnsley	27.15
Everton	27.28
Wimbledon	27.54
Blackburn	27.67
Newcastle	27.77
Sheffield Wednesday	28.44
Bolton	28.53
Coventry	28.98
Arsenal	29.36

Based on average ages for all Premiership games so far this season

Old hands

Player	Age
Steve Ogrizovic (Coventry)	40
Neville Southall (Everton)	35
Peter Beardsley (Bolton)	36
Peter Shirliff (Barnsley)	36
Garry Mabbutt (Tottenham)	36
Ian Rush (Newcastle)	35
Dave Watson (Everton)	35
Ludek Mikosko (West Ham)	35
Steve Nicol (Sheffield Wednesday)	35
Stuart Pearce (Newcastle)	35
Andy Linington (Crystal Palace)	35

Young guns

Player	Age
Michael Owen (Liverpool)	17.12.79
Danny Cadamarteri (Everton)	17.12.79
Michael Ball (Everton)	17.12.79
John O'Shea (Everton)	17.12.79
Rio Ferdinand (West Ham)	18.12.78
Michael Branch (Everton)	18.12.78
Harry Kewell (Leeds)	22.9.78
Sam Shilton (Coventry)	21.7.78
Frank Lampard (West Ham)	20.6.78
Stephen Clemence (Tottenham)	31.3.78
Jamie Carragher (Liverpool)	28.1.78
Emile Heskey (Leicester)	11.1.78
Stuart Campbell (Leicester)	8.12.77
Richie Humphries (Sheffield Wednesday)	30.11.77
Carl Cort (Wimbledon)	1.11.77
Andrew Williams (Southampton)	8.10.77
Duncan Speeding (Southampton)	7.9.77

Statistics: Brian Sees

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP: HOW THEY STAND

		Home					Away					Form (last result on right)	Upcoming matches			
		R	Pts	GD	W	D	L	F	A	W	D			L	F	A
		22	27		1	0	5			0	0	6	9	WWWLW	18 Oct N. Ireland 2-0 Aston Villa (H) 19 Nov Derby 2-0 N. Ireland (H) (F)	
2	Man Utd	10	21	+10	4	1	0	10	3	2	2	1	4	1	WDDLW	18 Oct Derby (A); 25 Oct Barnsley (F); 1 Nov Sheff Wed (H); 9 Nov Arsenal (A)
		22	27		1	0	5			0	0	6	9	LDLWW	18 Oct Sheff Wed 2-0 N. Ireland (H) 19 Nov Barnsley 2-0 N. Ireland (H)	
4	Leicester	10	18	+6	2	3	1	9	6	3	0	1	5	2	WYDWL	18 Oct Chelsea (A); 27 Oct West Ham (H); 1 Nov Newcastle (A); 10 Nov Wimbledon (H)
		22	27		1	0	5			0	0	6	9	WLDWL	18 Oct Arsenal 2-0 N. Ireland (H) 19 Nov Sheff Wed 2-0 N. Ireland (H)	
6	Derby	8	15	+8	3	0	0	8	1	2	0	3	8	7	WLWWW	18 Oct Man Utd (F); 25 Oct Liverpool (A); 1 Nov Arsenal (H); 8 Nov Leeds (A)
		22	27		1	0	5			0	0	6	9	WDLWL	18 Oct Arsenal 2-0 N. Ireland (H) 19 Nov Barnsley 2-0 N. Ireland (H)	
8	Newcastle	7	15	+2	4	0	1	6	4	1	0	1	1	1	LWWLW	18 Oct Leeds (A); 25 Oct Blackburn (H); 1 Nov Liverpool (A); 8 Nov Coventry (A)
		22	27		1	0	5			0	0	6	9	WLWWL	18 Oct Arsenal 2-0 N. Ireland (H) 19 Nov Barnsley 2-0 N. Ireland (H)	
10	Aston Villa	10	13	-4	2	1	1	5	7	2	0	4	6	8	WWLWD	18 Oct Wimbledon (H); 25 Oct Arsenal (A); 1 Nov Chelsea (H); 8 Nov Crystal Palace (A)
		22	27		1	0	5			0	0	6	9	LDLWL	18 Oct Arsenal 2-0 N. Ireland (H) 19 Nov Barnsley 2-0 N. Ireland (H)	
12	Coventry	10	12	-3	2	4	0	8	6	0	2	2	0	5	WDDDD	20 Oct Barnsley (A); 25 Oct Everton (H); 1 Nov Wimbledon (A); 8 Nov Newcastle (H)
		22	27		1	0	5			0	0	6	9	WDDDL	18 Oct Arsenal 2-0 N. Ireland (H) 19 Nov Barnsley 2-0 N. Ireland (H)	
14	Tottenham	10	10	-5	2	2	1	4	4	0	2	3	2	7	LDLWL	18 Oct Sheff Wed (H); 25 Oct Southampton (A); 1 Nov Leeds (H); 8 Nov Liverpool (A)
		22	27		1	0	5			0	0	6	9	WLDWL	18 Oct Arsenal 2-0 N. Ireland (H) 19 Nov Barnsley 2-0 N. Ireland (H)	
16	Sheff Wed	10	9	-9	2	1	2	7	9	0	2	3	7	4	LDLDW	18 Oct Tottenham (A); 25 Oct Crystal Palace (H); 1 Nov Man Utd (A); 8 Nov Bolton (H)
		22	27		1	0	5			0	0	6	9	DDDDL	18 Oct Arsenal 2-0 N. Ireland (H) 19 Nov Barnsley 2-0 N. Ireland (H)	
18	Everton	9	8	-5	2	1	2	9	9	0	1	3	2	7	LWLDL	18 Oct Liverpool (H); 25 Oct Coventry (A); 2 Nov Southampton (H); 8 Nov Blackburn (A)
		22	27		1	0	5			0	0	6	9	LDLWL	18 Oct Arsenal 2-0 N. Ireland (H) 19 Nov Barnsley 2-0 N. Ireland (H)	
20	Barnsley	10	6	-21	1	0	4	3	11	1	0	4	4	11	LLLLL	20 Oct Coventry (H); 25 Oct Man Utd (A); 1 Nov Blackburn (H); 8 Nov Southampton (A)

FAIR PLAY LEAGUE

Referee	G	R	Yellow	Pts	Ave
1. S. Dunn	2	1	13	18	8.3
2. G. Wiliam	2	1	13	18	8.3
3. M. Riley	3	1	13	18	8.3
4. P. Durkin	3	1	13	18	8.3
5. J. Winter	3	1	11	16	5.33
6. M. Bodenham	3	0	14	14	4.67
7. G. Barber	3	0	12	12	4
8. P. Alcock	2	0	8	8	4
9. A. White	5	1	14	19	3.8
10. P. Jones	3	0	11	11	3.67
11. G. Ashby	2	0	7	7	3.5
12. U. Rennie	3	0	10	10	3.33
13. M. Reed	1	0	3	3	3
14. N. Barry	3	0	8	8	2.67
15. D. Gallagher	2	0	7	7	2.33
16. K. Budge	3	0	7	7	2.33
17. D. Elbery	3	0	9	9	3
18. G. Poff	4	0	7	7	1.75
19. S. Lodge	4	0	7	7	1.75

(Premiership matches only; Red cards: Spots, Yellow: 1pt)

UNFAIR PLAY LEAGUE

	P	R	Y
1 Everton	5	1	12
2 Sheff Wed	6	1	14
3 C Palace	6	0	14
4 Newcastle	3	1	4
5 Chelsea	5	1	9
6 Tottenham	8	1	10
7 Leeds	8	1	10
8 Arsenal	8	0	14
9 Coventry	6	0	15
10 Derby	4	0	9
11 Wimbledon	5	0	10
12 Bolton	5	0	9
13 Southampton	6	0	10
14 West Ham	6	0	10
15 Liverpool	5	0	8
16 Leicester	6	0	8
17 Blackburn	6	0	8
18 Man Utd	5	0	6
19 A Villa	6	0	5
20 Barnsley	6	0	4

(Red cards: Spots, Yellow: 1pt)

LEADING PREMIERSHIP SCORERS

Player	Lg	CC	Euro	Tot
1. Bergkamp (Arsenal)	10	0	1	11
2. Sutton (Barnsley)	9	1	0	10
3. Hirston (W Ham)	5	5	0	10</



Saturday 18 October 1997

Seedings grow from England and Scotland successes

The complicated qualification formula for next year's World Cup finals aroused much controversy, but Uefa has decided to repeat the procedure for the qualifying competition for the European Championship in 2000. This means that there will again be plenty of games involving minnows – but at least England and Scotland are likely to be seeded. Glenn Moore, Football Correspondent, reports.

England and Scotland are both set to be seeded when the draw for the qualifying rounds of the 2000 European Championship is made early next year.

England's seeding will be a reward for finishing above Italy in their World Cup qualifying group while Scotland's first-ever seeding follows impressive displays in qualifying for both the World Cup and Euro 96. However, both countries will still have to play minor nations like San Marino and the Faroe Islands after Uefa, European football's governing body, decided against having a pre-qualifying phase for the competition.

Instead the procedure will be identical to the World Cup qualifying with England again likely to be placed in a five-team qualifying group and Scotland in a six. The fi-

nals are to be shared by Belgium and the Netherlands.

The seeding formula, which needs to be ratified by Uefa's executive committee in Geneva on 5 and 6 December, is based on results in the qualifying competitions for Euro 96 and the 1998 World Cup. England, who can only be assessed on their World Cup record as they did not need to qualify for Euro 96, are fourth and Scotland level sixth with Yugoslavia. The table is led by Spain, Romania and Russia and also includes Germany, Italy and Norway. Missing from the first rank of seeds are France and the Netherlands. The Dutch, however, qualify automatically as do Belgium who will host the qualifying draw on 18 January in Ghent.

In order to reduce fixture congestion

there will be four sets of double-header internationals, on Wednesday and the following Saturday, as with Scotland's ill-fated trip to Latvia and Estonia. But Uefa have resisted pressure to filter out the junior nations. Apart from Liechtenstein's freak draw with the Republic of Ireland these matches are usually a pointless exercise and Franz Beckenbauer is among those calling for a pre-qualifying tournament.

Uefa's action is partly altruistic and partly political. They are keen to promote football in emerging nations such as Moldova and have given financial aid to such countries. They are also keen to recognise as many nations as possible in order to increase voting strength in the ongoing power struggle with Fifa, the world governing body. Uefa have

attempted to placate the bigger countries like England, Germany, Spain and Italy by guaranteeing them a place in a five-team group.

In a rare coup for England, Uefa have agreed to accept English as the "authoritative language" in disputes – however, they will make an exception when they deal with their own recently rewritten rulebook, which is in German. The Uefa statutes now incorporate the Swiss "Court of Arbitration in Sport" in an attempt to head off the growing inclination of clubs and federations to resort to law.

The World Cup seedings remain uncertain. Early reports suggested England would not be one of the eight seeds for next summer as ranking would be decided on recent World Cup finals performances. However, Fifa are anxious to incorporate

their own rankings system in some way and are also considering recognising the growing influence of African football by seeding one of their five qualifiers.

Nothing can be decided until after the European play-offs as Italy, if they qualify, are certain to be seeded. The final decision will be confirmed at the World Cup organising committee meeting in Marseilles on 2 December, two days before the draw, but a probable system is likely to be agreed before the last qualifying match in Australia on 29 November. Sir Bert Millichip is England's representative on the relevant committee but other Football Association officials will also be lobbying hard. Though being seeded no longer carries the advantage of being based in one site it does mean avoiding Brazil.

GOLF

Price injury leaves rival captain unemployed

Zimbabwe's challenge at the Alfred Dunhill Cup has been handicapped by Nick Price's withdrawal through injury, just as the complexities of the format became apparent. Andy Farrell reports from St Andrews.

The obvious difference between this competition and the World Cup is that one features three-man teams and the other two-man sides. Not for Zimbabwe. The No 3 seeds were downsized from a trio to a duo when the injured Nick Price quit after 12 holes yesterday.

Price, who started to feel the mystery injury after losing to Ernie Els in the semi-finals of the World Match Play a week ago, was level with Miguel Angel Jimenez when he retired. His team-mates, Tony Johnstone and Mark McNulty, both won, however, to give Zimbabwe a 2-1 victory over Spain.

Neither can afford to drop another point. Today in their last qualifying match, Zimbabwe face New Zealand, who beat South Korea 3-0, with the winners topping Group Four and reaching Sunday's semi-finals.

"They say 'beware of the injured golfer'. They might as well give us the trophy now," Johnstone, Zimbabwe's captain, said. "Nick is not one to complain about pain so it must be extremely sore. We are just grateful he made the effort and won an important match when I lost yesterday. It is about time Mark and I carried him. He has been carrying us all these years."

Price, who aggravated the pulled oblique muscle in his left side when he lost to Brad Faxon in third-fourth play-off at



Spectators look down on the fifth green at St Andrews yesterday during the match between Colin Montgomerie and Sven Struver

Photograph: David Ashdown

Wentworth on Sunday, is the first player in the 13 editions of the event who has had to retire. Inevitably with this competition, there is no easy answer as to replacement is on hand. Thanks to their seeding, Zimbabwe get first pick of a pairing in every match unless they meet America in the final, and they can use the device to take out the opposition's best player.

"You know who won't be playing tomorrow," McNulty

said. Frank Nobilo, the New Zealand captain, will have to sit out while Michael Long and Steve Alker seek one point between them. One contest that will be happening is that which pits Els against Colin Montgomerie.

Scotland and South Africa both won for the second time so their match will decide Group Three. David Frost, the Springboks' captain, confirmed the policy of playing Els against their opponent's No 1. This was

news to Monty. "Delightful. Great. We'll see what happens," he said.

Apart from at two US Opens, the second of which was only last June at Congressional, Els also defeated the Scot during the 1994 World Match Play Championship, although Montgomerie won a play-off against the South African at last year's Million Dollar Challenge. "I've got a couple on Colin," Els said. "He seems to be in a good

mood this week. I will have to play well."

England's situation is not so clear after Lee Westwood took a double-bogey six at the 17th. He went from one ahead to one behind Angel Cabrera, which led to Argentina beating England for the third time in three attempts. The English now have to beat the top-seeded Americans 3-0 to be sure of going through. A 2-1 win might be good enough unless Argentina

defeat Japan 3-0. Then the rules get complicated and the slide rule, and aggregate scores, apply. "Unless they are wearing red trousers and then Japan go through," Mark James said.

On a gusty day, the higher mathematics of the format were of no concern to the English captain. "It pales into insignificance compared to trying to play this course in this weather."

Scores, tables, Digest page 23

Little hints in chase for Gascoigne

Chelsea and Everton yesterday dropped out of the running to provide Paul Gascoigne with a home in English football, while Aston Villa gave a tantalising hint that the Rangers and England midfielder could still be moving to the Midlands.

It was left to Brian Little to keep everyone on tenterhooks. "There is a possibility that we might have somebody here by next week," he said, again insisted that any moves to sign the former Tottenham player, for whom Villa have tabled a £4m bid, will not happen until after next week's Uefa Cup tie in Athletic Bilbao.

There was no mystery about the new face at Southampton, where the 29-year-old David Hirst became the Saints' most expensive signing at £2m from Sheffield Wednesday.

The Football League is to consider turning the Coca-Cola Cup into an Anglo-Scottish competition with the final played at either Wembley or Hampden.

The League chairman, David Shepphards, said: "I think now is a good time to seriously discuss a British Cup."

INSIDE

12 pages of sport start on page 17

THE HIGHER EDUCATION GUIDE

On Friday 24 October and Friday 31 October, The Independent will be publishing The Higher Education Guide, an honest, direct and down to earth guide to British higher education in two special supplements.

The guide is geared towards students taking A-levels and planning to go into higher education, as well as their parents and careers advisers.

The Higher Education Guide will be produced in association with "The Student Book 1998", published by Trotman.

THE INDEPENDENT

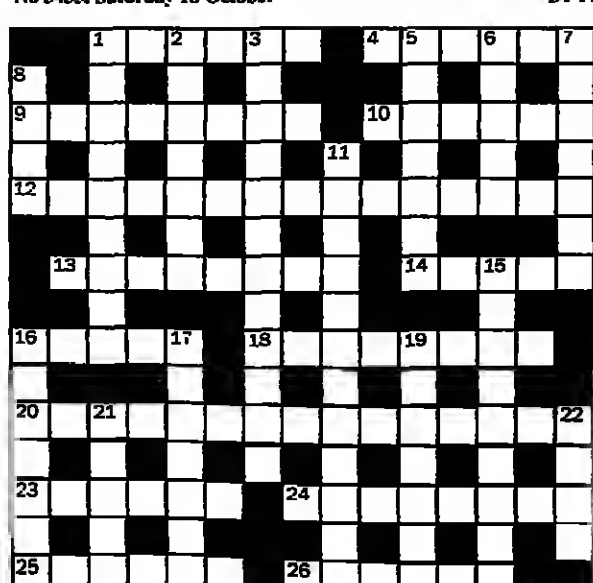
THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No 3433, Saturday 18 October

BY Phil

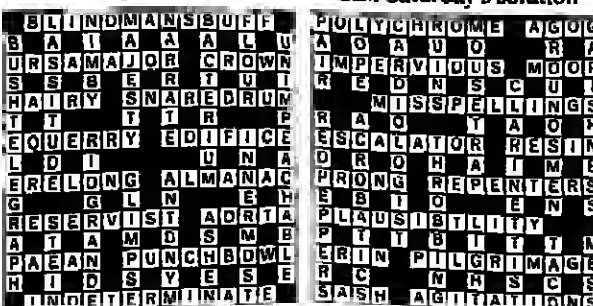
ACROSS

DOWN



Friday's solution

Last Saturday's solution



- 1 Is city investing in telecommunications company out in two? (6)
- 4 Talk about shortened athletic event (5)
- 9 Chap takes on University cadet, trained and knowledgeable (8)
- 10 Back English author (6)
- 12 Agricultural developments making life hard for golfers! (5,10)
- 13 Familiar music used in battle charge? (8)
- 14 Dull house needs to sound active (2,3)
- 16 Judges question releasing last traitor (5)
- 18 Tell chap to be casual (8)
- 20 Ends game for bridge opponents – will both these get upset about that? (5,3,7)
- 23 No faction backed scientist (6)
- 24 Nothing distracted a string player (8)
- 25 Offence in Church – crime involving doctor attended by Yard (6)
- 26 First of runners tucking into meat has to go fast (6)

- 1 After most of fight, composer turned up dead in Parisian street (9)
- 2 Stem offering reliable support (7)
- 3 Fear I'm wrong to interrupt nursery's dairy food (5,7)
- 5 Informed, but out of the field (2,5)
- 6 Exclamation over US soldier's dog (5)
- 7 A certain amount is to be seen surrounding bird's bone (7)
- 8 Composer's appeal involving heart of quartet (4)
- 11 Succeed, get the better of? Quite the opposite! (4,3,5)
- 15 Despondent countryman restraining flowing tears (5,4)
- 16 Girl to bring joy to unemployed (7)
- 17 "Anon" covers some tomfool poet (7)
- 19 Town – agree it needs rebuilding (7)
- 21 With a little work, I am restricting introduction of unlawful drug (5)
- 22 Elizabeth shunning book's artist (4)

The first five correct solutions to this week's puzzle appear next Thursday receive hand-drawn copies of the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations. Answers and winners' names will be published next Saturday. Send solutions to Saturday Crossword, P.O. Box 4018, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 3BL. Please use the box number and postcode and give your own postcode. Last week's winners: C Priestman, Shipston-on-Stour; G Talbot, Oxford; N Long, Bristol; B MacVivian, Glasgow; D Gibbo, Lanes, Ireland.

RUGBY UNION

De Glanville backs Dallaglio for captaincy

Phil de Glanville was thrown the journalistic equivalent of a hospital pass yesterday and promptly found himself buried beneath a ton of unwelcome publicity. England's captain said he expected Lawrence Dallaglio, the Wasps flanker, to take over the reins for next month's home Test with Australia and confessed that he was unsure of securing a place in the starting line-up.

De Glanville, who led England in six of last season's seven internationals, was asked whether he would pick himself as captain if he were the new England coach, Clive Woodward. "I'm not really sure," he said. "At present I would pick Lawrence. He has the respect of all the players and leads from the front. It's very difficult to say but you have to be realistic. My money is on Lawrence."

Woodward has put the captaincy issue low on his list of priorities, and De Glanville's comments suggested he had done likewise. The Bath centre said he did not consider himself to be at the helm, even though he led his country in their last Test, the comprehensive defeat by the Wallabies in Sydney three months ago, and stressed that selection was his primary goal.

The contest for outside-half and centre is likely to exercise Woodward's mind more than any other and De Glanville agreed there were a number of possible combinations, despite injury accounting for Jeremy Guscott, his club-mate and rival. "There are so many players pushing for places," he said. "I've never taken anything for granted and I'm not sure if I'll make the team."

— Chris Hewett

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Saturday 18 October 1997



What's mine isn't yours: Divorcing couples use their home and its contents as the last weapon in a bitter dispute – and estate agents earn their commission from them

Photomontage: Jonathan Anstee

Divorce creates a goldmine for estate agents

One in four marriages now breaks up, according to official figures. At least 150,000 couples will divorce this year and one, if not both, of the partners will need to find somewhere else to live. But, as Penny Jackson writes, there is one group of people who expect to do well out of our marital woes — estate agents.

Even though the UK's divorce figures have been falling slightly in the past few years, this country nevertheless has the dubious distinction of having the third-highest number of marriage breakdowns in Europe.

Not only are single buyers increasing in number but a growing proportion of these have left a marriage or long-term relationship, according to a report this week by General Accident Property Services.

Often with children, they are reluctant to settle for something much smaller than they are used to. So it is not surprising

that estate agents see divorce as a substantial part of their business. From one broken marriage could come three transactions.

"We take on far more divorce-related sales than we do for death," says Richard Willis-croft of the Chichester-based Henry Adams and Partners.

"No wonder they say here, 'Are you happily married or do you live in West Sussex?' It is undoubtedly our biggest sector and it has grown in the past few years."

Like other agents familiar with the painful consequences of divorce, he has learned how to tread diplomatically through emotional minefields: "It all comes down to trust and sensitivity. For instance, we show people around when the children are at school.

"And if a woman is being forced to sell, you have to be careful that a potential purchaser doesn't reduce her to tears by saying how lovely a room is or asking how she can bear to leave. We act as a buffer. Solicitors and spouses even use us to find out whether a certain offer is acceptable or whether someone could be out by a certain date. We do not get drawn into taking sides."

NO, that's easy enough, when divorcing couples use their home and its contents as the last weapon in a bitter dispute.

One partner may want to see a high valuation on a house, the other low. They may try to drag out a sale or alternatively sell it as quickly as possible at a rock-bottom price to spite each

Each partner may have instructed a different agent. Into these murky waters steps Ruairaidh Adams-Cairns, who runs the litigation support department at Savills, the property consultants.

The wealthy not only like to organise their finances from Loodoo but their divorces as well and the properties he values are worth not less than £1.5m. Increasingly he is used by both parties although he has been known to drive a sceptical husband around a selection of houses to prove a point.

Ex-wives should not have to move from Chelsea or do without a swimming pool if that is what they are used to.

"Wealthy or not, any couple divorcing would do well to employ a chartered surveyor to do a bank valuation. An estate agent's marketing report based on a wildly optimistic guide price can cause an unbridgeable

rin, says Mr. Adams-Carnes. The co-habiting "divorce" is no less troubled and in many cases is more complicated. "Ideally couples should be co-owners of a property, otherwise they should sign a declaration of trust," says Hazel Wright, of solicitors Cumberland Ellis Peirs.

"Without such a legally binding agreement one partner could find themselves without a home. In the case of same-sex couples they may not even be welcomed back by their families. If there are children it is easier since provision is made under the Children Act."

Most commonly, divorce which causes the greatest upheaval in terms of the division of assets happens when a couple are in their 40s. They will have lavished time and money on their home and moving is a terrible wrench.

Mary Drewes fought hard to stay in the £260,000 family house when her husband left her and their two children. "I was able to argue that in a rising market we would not save anything by moving. But then he started to get difficult about its increasing value. In the end we managed to do a trade-off with other assets. I am going to

have to take in a lodger, though, to help pay the way."

This is not unusual. While divorce is lucrative for lawyers and estate agents, it is liable to impoverish the respondents. Lindsay Cuthill, from Savills' Fulham office, has noticed the tendency for divorcees to overestimate their settlement.

"It is often substantially below that [original estimate] and we advise them not to start looking for another home until they are sure of the amount. You do end up being viewed as a counsellor and people tell me far too much about the circumstances of their divorce."

Rarely is a sale straightforward. "I went around to one house where the couple were living on different floors and another where the custody of the dog was disputed," he said.

Perhaps this is one area where all agree that estate agents do earn their commission. Françoise Ellery of Browns, in Surrey, was selling a Grade II listed house for a divorcing couple. "The wife used every tactic to stop us showing the house. First of all it was overpriced. It was kept in a terrible mess or there would be no key when we arrived. It took a year longer to sell than it should have done."

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INSIDE

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British minnows shine in the car makers' pool



NIC
CICUTTI

Virgin has done it again

A sad ritual appears to be developing here. Every few months, this column reviews one of the growing number of products coming from the stable of Richard Branson's fledgling financial services empire, Virgin Direct. Each time, I end up praising the company's initiatives, albeit with some caveats.

This week, Virgin has teamed up with Royal Bank of Scotland and its main financial backer, the Australian insurance giant AMP, to come up with a lifetime mortgage/savings account called One. Is this initiative also worth two-and-a-half cheers? I'm afraid so.

What Virgin has done is to start a debate on exactly what constitutes a bank account. Until now, the typical system has involved an account through which all sorts of other bills, standing orders and debits are paid, including mortgages.

Virgin's idea is that you borrow money to buy a house and for your living expenses from its One account and pay in your wages each month in the expectation that the repayments you make each month will cancel out the debt before you retire.

The package comes with bells and whistles: there is a 24-hour telephone banking service, you receive a debit card and cheque book and monthly statements will tell you how much you have paid off. Interest on the card is set at the mortgage rate, currently a maximum of 8.9 per cent, still much cheaper than virtually any other card.

Moreover, the amount you pay in is immediately credited against what you

owe, reducing debt that much faster. Virgin calculates that the total saving for some people could run into tens of thousands of pounds over 25 years. Wonderful.

Yet for many people, having a separate mortgage account into which you pay a monthly amount is an essential discipline needed if the loan is to be paid off on time.

Virgin says there are many people who chafe at this "discipline". This is true. There are also many others who, were it not for the fact that they have to account to a lender each month, might let their payments dip. If you are one of these people, Virgin's One is not for you.

Moreover, interest rates offered to those who move into credit after a few years is a fairly measly 5 per cent gross. Here, Virgin says that as the minimum borrowing period is five years, there is plenty of time before this will need to be paid, by which time its rates may have risen. So, two cheers for Virgin then. Oh hell, two-and-a-half.

Last week, I said some scathing things about NatWest Life's uncompetitive pension products. Say what you like about the outfit, but they have efficient PRs. In the pained tones reserved for personal finance journalists I was informed that NatWest Life's charges on its products are only slightly worse than average.

Given that charges on pensions are generally a rip-off, I'm not sure quite what point they are trying to make. But if they want me to accept that NatWest Life is barely average, I'm happy to do so.

MONEY MAKEOVER

Ways to keep the taxman from the door

Name: Harriet Craven
Age: 52
Occupation: University lecturer
The problem: She recently took early retirement, receiving a lump sum of about £30,000, which is in Britannia Building Society.

Harriet receives a small monthly pension, enough to meet bills on her home, on which she has a small mortgage, and she works part time. She owns 450 shares from Woolwich Building Society's stock market flotation, which are invested in a Fidelity PEP. She has a very small endowment with Sun Life. Harriet would like to invest in a tax-efficient way. The investment should be for growth initially, but with the option to provide an income in the future when fully retired.

She is also considering taking in a lodger or letting the entire property to augment her income. Her son lives at home with her.

The adviser: Fiona Price, managing director, Fiona Price & Partners, independent financial advisers, 33 Great Queen Street, London WC2B 5AA, phone 0171-430 0366.

The advice: You have a current account with NatWest with around £1,000 in it but if it starts to build up any higher, it should be transferred to your savings account where it will earn a higher rate of interest. You also have a savings account with Britannia Building Society with around £27,000 deposited. We recommend you maintain a minimum of three months' net income for emergencies.

We would recommend you move to Britannia's Capital Trust 30-day notice account. This is a postal account pay-



Harriet Craven wants to invest her money for growth now, and switch to income in a few years' time

ing a reasonably competitive 6 per cent gross on deposits over £5,000. Alternatively, you may wish to move your funds to Abbey National's Bonus Postal account, which pays 7.2 per cent gross on balances from £2,000 to £9,999.

You should also consider starting a Tessa (tax exempt special savings account). Tessa is a bank or building so-

ciety accounts where deposits held within them for a five-year term are not subject to income tax. You can only have one Tessa at any one time and the amount that may be invested is limited to £9,000 over the five-year term.

Royal Bank of Scotland is offering a gross annual rate of 7.65 per cent and we recommend investing £3,000 in it.

National Savings are risk-free government products which can be purchased through the Post Office. This investment is designed to provide tax-free capital growth over a five-year period. The return will match inflation, enhanced by an additional 2.75 per cent per annum. We recommend you invest £3,000, but first read our advice below on a single-company PEP.

On the investment side, you transferred your Woolwich shares into a PEP with Fidelity, which offers one of the best plans for windfall shares and makes no charge until 1999. As you have already invested with Fidelity for the current tax year, you may not use any other provider for your general PEP. We recommend a £6,000 investment in a Fidelity PEP. We suggest Fidelity's WealthBuilder fund.

In addition to your allowance of £6,000 for a general PEP, you may contribute £3,000 into a single-company PEP. We suggest you consider investing £3,000 in a secure single-company PEP as an alternative to the National Savings index-linked certificate.

We recommend the HSBC International PEP Plus. This is a 5.5-year fixed-term contract and pays your money back at the end. In addition, you will achieve the average growth of a range of stock markets over the period. If you remain invested for the full term, you receive a loyalty bonus of 20 per cent of the growth achieved.

We also recommend you invest £8,000 in a with-profits fund. The value increases each year through bonuses which, once added, cannot be taken away. Furthermore, a terminal bonus may also be payable.

Other than the small Sun Life endowment, you do not have any life assurance, nor is it necessary. Your son would benefit from your estate in the event of your death and hence would have sufficient assets for his needs.

You have no disability insurance but your employer will continue to pay your salary for six to 12 months if you are unable to work. You may want to consider Permanent Health Insurance. Premiums for a policy paying about £700 a month would cost about £40 a month.

Your house is valued at around £220,000. You are concerned that you might have to sell your house to fund nursing home fees if you required long-term care. There are a number of insurance policies that can provide an annual income to cover the cost of the fees and these can be funded by means of a regular premium or lump sum. We would be happy to provide a recommendation for this kind of cover but if your primary concern is the loss of your home we would suggest you consult your solicitor.

Taking in a lodger can prove tax-efficient. You are permitted to receive up to £4,250 annually in rent from a lodger without paying tax. If you rent your home, you will be subject to tax at your marginal rate.

Your total estate is worth more than the threshold of £215,000 and hence inheritance tax at the rate of 40 per cent would be payable. It could be covered by assets such as bank and building society accounts and investments. The verdict: Fiona's advice was very comprehensive. The fact that I had options to choose between was useful.

UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT/NORWICH UNION'S LONG-TERM PERSONAL CAREPLAN

Good value in covering the cost of extended nursing

The product: Norwich Union's Long Term Personal Careplan (Future Assured).

The deal: One in three women and 20 per cent of men will need long-term care before they die. This product aims to fund long-term care, bypassing tough local authority restrictions on the

amount of help that can be given before a person's home must be sold to pay for care.

A 60-year-old woman can obtain cover worth £12,000 a year for £73 a month or a one-off premium of £12,960. A male aged 60 would pay £59 a month, or a £9,380 lump sum. A high-

er premium could generate a higher benefit. Norwich Union will pay for nursing at home, wheelchairs, chairlifts or any similar aids. It will find nursing homes, or visiting nurses, and monitor their cost and quality. Plus points: The policy removes a nasty risk facing thou-

sands of pensioners who could lose their homes. The policy seems good value compared to many other providers. Ditching controversial and potentially humiliating "Activities of Daily Living" tests, NU uses a fuller test run by an independent assessor to validate claims.

Drawbacks and risks: Because this is an insurance policy, policyholders may be among the two in three women, or four in five men, who never need long-term care. Premiums are then dead money. Scottish Amicable, by contrast, has an investment-linked contract whereby the

money would pass to your estate if LTC were not required. David Wright, of financial adviser Johnstone Douglas, worries that premiums are cheap and may have to rise. Verdict: A good offer. Worth considering if budgets allow. Marks out of five: Three.

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هذا من الاصل

Let the little folk carry you away

From now on, look twice at any painting or print with fairies, goblins or dragons in it, especially if it is Victorian. It could be worth snapping up. As John Windsor explains, the next collecting boom could leave you with a fairytale ending.

There are fairies at the bottom of the next art investment boomlet. Sotheby's will be first into the magic circle with a bumper 326-lot sale of British Fantasy Art on 30 October, culled partly from a big private collection.

At the Royal Academy, an exhibition, Victorian Fairy Painting, opens on 13 November, the same date as a selling exhibition, Fairy Folk in Fairy Land, at the London Dealer Peter Nahum's Leicester Galleries.

Paintings of fairies by Victorian artists whose names have hitherto been scarcely known at street level - John Anster "Fairy" Fitzgerald, John Simmons, Robert Huskisson - will rise in price.

So will fairy paintings by Victorians best known for other subject matter, such as those of John Atkinson Grimshaw. His paintings of dimly lit, squelchy suburban streets are worth up to £200,000. His rarer fairy paintings, such as his *Iris, Spirit of the Rainbow*, are show at the Leicester Galleries, could now be worth £120,000.

And there will be new interest in such characters as Richard "Dickie" Doyle, father of Arthur Conan Doyle, spiritualist and creator of Sherlock Holmes. Dickie was a household name in Victorian times. He designed the famous frolicking *Punch* magazine cover of 1849 and was a prolific illustrator of fairy tale books.

There are ink and watercolour works of his at Sotheby's at £600-£800. Mr Nahum disdains Doyle's sketchy sketches but is offering his full-colour original prints at £500-£600 and watercolours at around £5,000.

Sotheby's also has pencil, ink and chalk sketches by Sir Joseph



John Atkinson Grimshaw, well known for his paintings of dimly lit, squelchy suburban streets, also painted 'Iris, Spirit of the Rainbow'

Noel Paton, a well-known illustrator of his day, rather bullishly estimated from £400-£600 for a lot of 10 to £3,000-£4,000.

There has not been such a major rediscovery of a collecting genre since Victorian painting itself came to the fore at auction in the late Eighties. Then, fairies were dismissed as peripheral to the artists' main oeuvre. Real flesh and blood, especially female and diaphanously draped, and busy genre scenes were the thing.

But the Victorians' fairies were not just meaningless ephemera. They were deeply embedded in their psyche. Fairyland offered a haven from the demands of scientific and technological progress, in which the occult and the erotic could flourish without disapproval.

Mr Nahum has discovered that some of their goings-on had symbolic meaning for Masons and Rosicrucians. A Sylph sprinkling early morning pearls of dew is likely to be the Rosicrucian spirit of the air for the Ros Crus, the dew cross. Fairies could become a lucrative quarry for collector-investors prepared to research the Victorians' fascination with the occult.

The craze for fairies had its heyday from about 1840, when spiritualism and table-rapping spread from America to Britain, until about 1870. But it remained a potent undercurrent in British painting and illustration up until the horrors of the First World War.

It is a peculiarly British genre. You can find echoes of Paton and Fitzgerald in the Pre-Raphaelites.

Having seen the RA exhibition, visit the Tate's exhibition, 'The Age of Rossetti, Burne-Jones and Watts: Symbolism in Britain 1860-1910' for comparison. Those three were away with the little folk.

Much of the seductive appeal of the Victorian artists' fairylands lay in their realism. The crowded fairy scenes of Doyle or Paton were just as believable as Frith's scenes of *The Derby Day* or *The Railway Station*. Add a whiff of opium, which fairy paintings occasionally hint at, and the jaded Victorians were off on a totally legit trip.

But if you hesitate to reach for your wallet, consider this: the Japanese are buying fairies. The word that sparked the present proliferation of fairyology in London came from Kimie Imura-Lawlor,

Professor of English literature at the University of Meisei, Tokyo. She has accumulated a big collection of Victorian fairy pictures, some bought for her by Mr Nahum, has translated Conan Doyle and Joe Cooper's book on the Cottingley fairy hoax, and has published monographs tracing how Japanese literature began to adapt British fairies in the Twenties and Thirties.

Sotheby's auction: 'Realms of the Mind: British Fantasy Art and Illustration', Thursday 30 October (10.30am), Leicester Galleries selling exhibition, 'Fairy Folk in Fairy Land', 13 November-20 December. Illustrated book £10, £12.50 with p&p, 5 Ryder Street, London SW1 (0171-930 6059).

INTERNET INVESTOR

ROBIN AMLÖT

Find a mortgage on the Web

As a rough rule of thumb you can reckon on there being around 1,000 mortgage schemes on offer in the UK at any one time.

One of them will be right for you but quite how you find it may appear daunting. The power of your PC and of the World Wide Web can help you find the mortgage you want although you can not yet actually get a mortgage over the Web.

However, a number of brokers and providers will give you an indication in principle of whether your application is likely to succeed.

What you can do on nearly all the websites of the mortgage brokers and mortgage lenders on the Internet is calculate what your desired mortgage is likely to cost you.

Bear in mind that the number you will be offered will not be an exact quotation. Think of it more as a rough guide.

These "mortgage calculators" all have slightly different approaches - the look and feel may not be exactly the same - but all provide you with answers in just a few moments.

Working out what a mortgage would cost you used to take a fair chunk of time, a pocket calculator and several sheets of paper. No longer.

Most mortgage calculators on the Web allow you to specify the mortgage term and the size and type of the loan.

In return, they will show you the monthly repayments you are likely to face for a given rate of interest.

Some of the calculators ask you to set the rate of interest. Others offer you options to choose from.

Some calculators will also tell you what kind of income you are likely to need to support a given loan, based roughly on the standard multiples of three to three-and-a-half times single income and so on.

You may be considering an interest-only mortgage linked to some sort of savings vehicle to repay the capital sum at the end of the term.

If this is the case, Paragon Mortgage's site is among those which allow you to make a further calculation to

work out how much you need to save on a monthly basis to repay your mortgage at the end of the term.

This calculator allows you to vary the assumed annual growth rate, which means, for example, that if you are more pessimistic about the likely future returns on your investments, you may make greater provision.

Paragon also has a calculator called House Evaluator which will value your property.

In exchange for entering the original purchase price, month and year in which you bought and also the region in which you live, the calculator will give you an estimated current valuation.

This is obviously a simplistic exercise which does not, among other factors, take account of property type but may give you some idea of what your current home might realise when you put it on the market.

If you are a first-time buyer, your best starting place to discover the ins and outs of what taking on a mortgage entails is likely to be one of the mortgage brokers' sites or, alternatively, that of one of the major lenders such as Cheltenham & Gloucester, Halifax or Nationwide.

A quick link through their introductory pages is likely to save you at least one trip down the high street to a lender's branch.

Of course, what is available on the Web is changing and growing all the time.

For example, John Charcol, one of the country's leading mortgage brokers, now has a new site with a detailed and regularly updated guide to current mortgage "best buys".

John Charcol:
www.johncharcol.co.uk
Paragon Mortgages:
www.paragonmortgages.co.uk
Cheltenham & Gloucester:
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Car insurance on the way up

Prepare for the cost of motor insurance to go up over the next year. The cost of comprehensive policies rose just over 2 per cent in the last quarter. Non-comprehensive cover rose 1.7 per cent, according to a survey by AA Insurance.

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competition from several telephone-based insurers and brokers whose entry into the market in the past three years has forced prices down.

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Barclays Bank	0800 110 000	5.00% to 11.00%	90p	Yes
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UNSECURED				
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Capital One Direct	0800 210 000	12.99%	£100-£500	Yes
Alliance & Leicester	0800 820 000	13.99%	£100-£500	Yes
SECURED (SECOND CHARGE)				
Scottham Bank	0800 345 456	4.00% to 11.00%	50p	Yes
Royal Bank of Scotland	0800 121 121	10.00% to 11.00%	50p	Yes
First Direct	0800 100 000	10.00% to 11.00%	50p	Yes
OVERDRAFTS				
Abbey National				
Abbey National	0800 220 000	10.00% to 11.00%	50p	Yes
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Co-operative Bank	0800 100 000	12.99%	£100-£500	Yes
Co-operative Bank	0800 100 000	12.99%	£100-£500	Yes
Amend Express	01252 820 000	12.99%	£100-£500	Yes
STORE CARDS				
John Lewis				
John Lewis	01454 610 000	12.99%	£100-£500	Yes
Marks & Spencer	01234 610 000	12.99%	£100-£500	Yes
Sainsbury	01234 610 000	12.99%	£100-£500	Yes

BARGAIN BASEMENT

Scottish Life International is offering a six-year bond which provides 100 per cent capital security if held to maturity, plus a guaranteed bonus of 5.1 per cent a year. A further maturity bonus could increase the value to 169 per cent net after six years, depending on US and UK stock market performance. The bond is available until 22 October. Call 0131-456 6000.

Halifax is offering a five-year fixed-rate mortgage charging 6.85 per cent. An arrangement fee of £195 is waived for Halifax borrowers moving home, with a free valuation. Fees of between 1 and 5 per cent apply to early redemptions until 2005. Call 01422 333333.

National Westminster Bank has asked us to point out that it does not levy a charge of £50 for unauthorised overdrafts, as reported in these pages last week. Its charges are £3.50 a day and interest at 33.9 per cent APR.

Matrix Securities is launching the first Venture Capital Trust to offer warrants as well as ordinary shares. The warrants can be exercised at £1 in years four, five and six. The trust, called Foresight Technology, gives income tax relief of 20 per cent and allows deferral of capital gains tax. Call 0171-292 0800.

BEST SAVINGS RATES

Telephone	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest
INSTANT ACCESS					
Abbey National	0800 345 456	Instant	£1	4.21%	Yes
Cheltenham Bank	0800 442 000	Savings	£1	6.50%	Yes
Cheltenham BS	0800 442 000	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
Lloyds Bank	0800 442 000	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
INSTANT ACCESS POSTAL ACCOUNTS					
Scottham Bank	0800 345 456	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
Cheltenham Bank	0800 442 000	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
Cheltenham BS	0800 442 000	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
Lloyds Bank	0800 442 000	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
NOTICE ACCOUNTS & BONDS					
Abbey National	0800 345 456	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
Cheltenham Bank	0800 442 000	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
Cheltenham BS	0800 442 000	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
Lloyds Bank	0800 442 000	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
CHEQUE ACCOUNTS					
Abbey National	0800 345 456	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
Cheltenham Bank	0800 442 000	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
Cheltenham BS	0800 442 000	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
Lloyds Bank	0800 442 000	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
FIXED RATE BONDS					
Abbey National	0800 345 456	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
Cheltenham Bank	0800 442 000	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
Cheltenham BS	0800 442 000	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
Lloyds Bank	0800 442 000	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
FIRST TESSAS					
Abbey National	0800 345 456	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
Cheltenham Bank	0800 442 000	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
Cheltenham BS	0800 442 000	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
Lloyds Bank	0800 442 000	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
FOLLOW-ON TESSAS					
Abbey National	0800 345 456	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
Cheltenham Bank	0800 442 000	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
Cheltenham BS	0800 442 000	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
Lloyds Bank	0800 442 000	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS (NET)					
Abbey National	0800 345 456	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
Cheltenham Bank	0800 442 000	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
Cheltenham BS	0800 442 000	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
Lloyds Bank	0800 442 000	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
OFFSHORE ACCOUNTS (gross)					
Abbey National	0800 345 456	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
Cheltenham Bank	0800 442 000	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
Cheltenham BS	0800 442 000	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
Lloyds Bank	0800 442 000	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
NATIONAL SAVINGS ACCOUNTS (GROSS)					
Abbey National	0800 345 456	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
Cheltenham Bank	0800 442 000	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
Cheltenham BS	0800 442 000	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes
Lloyds Bank	0800 442 000	Instant Access	£1	6.50%	Yes

BRIAN TORA

Sneaky Germans

The trouble with going on holiday is the problems that mount up for you to deal with on your return. Just imagine. The Bundesbank sneakily put up interest rates - well, as sneakily as you can when every other aspiring entrant to EMU follows suit. Talk about an orchestrated knee-jerk reaction. And it added to the cost of my holiday!

The central banks of those countries deemed likely to be the first entrants to a single European currency reacted in a similar way. Expect more of the same over the next six months.

It was rather appropriate that my first task on returning to London was to address a convention of German bankers. From the perspective of Frankfurt and Hamburg, the prospect of a single European currency does not look in doubt. It is not just the political will that is there - the belief is that the economic convergence can be achieved.

It really is the topic of the moment. The Motor Show opened this week amid a flurry of statements from motor company chief executives saying Britain must be part of EMU. Already a number of car manufacturers with plants across Europe and in Britain are involving in euros. It was not just the continental car makers that wanted Britain in the single currency. General Motors has indicated it might move manufacturing on to the Continent if Britain stays out.

To some extent, this is posturing. The rise in sterling has undoubtedly hit the profits of some of the car manufacturers, but we retain a more flexible labour system which the manufacturing industry will be loath to surrender. It is hard to see a mass migration across the Channel post-January 1999. Nevertheless, the battle lines are being firmly drawn.

One British chief executive cast doubt on whether a single European currency was achievable in the absence of harmonious tax regimes. I have much sympathy with that. The booze cruise has become part of the British way of life.

It will become even more attractive if the costs of converting sterling into francs is removed as well.

In practice, some degree of local taxation differential is inevitable. It already exists in the sense that local authorities charge for their services at different rates. A more federal system would probably not create too many problems. But the big imbalances would have to be ironed out.

If this is a detail, then convergence remains the important aspect of the move to a single European currency. It has been the belief in convergence that has driven bond markets higher. Indeed, this has not just been a European phenomena. Third World debt has been accelerating in value, reducing the risk premium to the point where many commentators consider dangers are now being built into the system.

Even Alan Greenspan indicated he was concerned at the extent of possible overheating in the bond market.

His comments, and the rise in continental rates, have brought to a close the bull market running bonds that have delivered handsome profits over recent months. What we now have to determine is if the retrenchment will have far to go or if this will simply be a mild correction in what is otherwise a readjustment in the cost of money to reflect the realities of a low-inflation environment.

Time will tell, but writing this as I am, on the anniversary of the great storm that preceded the stock market crash, I am a little cautious.

Brian Tora is chairman of the investment strategy committee at Greig Middleton and may be contacted on 0171-655 4000.

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Virgin Direct £14.47	Virgin Direct £21.23
Marks and Spencer £15.65	Marks and Spencer £22.55

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Virgin Direct £9.18	Legal & General £12.30
Legal & General £9.30	Virgin Direct £13.43
Scottish Widows £10.00*	Scottish Widows £13.55
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THE JONATHAN DAVIS COLUMN

Correction is some way off

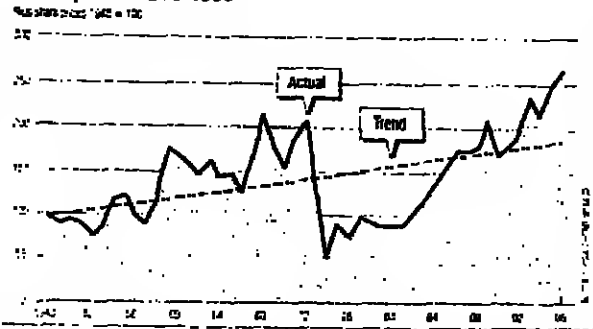
What are the lessons of the great stock market crash of 10 years ago? Rather like the Kennedy assassination, anyone in the City who lived through the dramatic events of the Monday market meltdown in October 1987 is unlikely to forget it. It was a time when great reputations, as well as great amounts of money, were won and lost.

Even the seasons seemed to be out of joint, adding to the sense that what was happening was in some way unreal. The Friday before the market took its big tumble, much of Britain had been brought to a standstill by freakish hurricane winds – the famous storms which the weatherman Michael Fish famously failed to forecast. George Soros, to name but one of the crash's victims, proved to be just as fallible. The world's most famous market speculator had publicly predicted a market crash only days before, but thought that it would come in Tokyo, not in London and New York. He lost several hundred million dollars when the wrong markets fell.

By contrast, someone who did come out of the crash with his reputation enhanced was Alan Greenspan, appointed as chairman of the Federal Reserve only months before the market went into its record nosedive. His sure handling of the potential financial crisis established the reputation for calm presence that has stuck to him ever since.

The immediate worry was that the stock market crash would turn a financial crisis into an economic slump, as it had done in the 1930s. Then governments and central bankers had compounded the problem by tightening monetary conditions. In 1987, forewarned by previous experience, and with Greenspan to the fore, the central bankers and finance ministers quickly made it clear that they were willing to take their grip off the monetary tiller if it proved necessary to keep the finan-

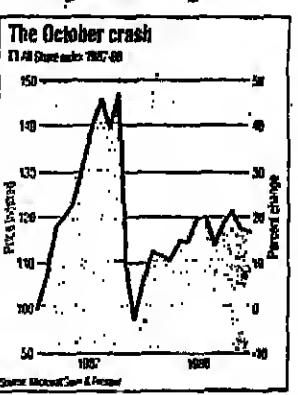
Share prices 1948-1996



cial system afloat. With hindsight, maybe they were too willing to avert trouble. Nigel Lawson, the then Chancellor, was certainly not helped by the crash. His "Yuppie boom" had helped to win the 1987 general election just four months earlier and sparked a lot of wild talk about Britain's new "economic miracle". But overconfidence of the kind that often precedes market setbacks proved his eventual undoing.

Looking back at the crash, it is easy to be sanguine. As we know now, the October 1987 market meltdown was a classic bursting of a speculative bubble, but the lasting fallout for investors was limited. On both sides of the Atlantic, share prices had simply moved too far ahead of themselves. The FT All-Share index had risen some 60 per cent in little more than seven months by the time it reached its peak (which was actually in July).

All the crash did, with hindsight, was bring the mar-



ket back down to earth, albeit in dramatic fashion. The index fell by some 30 per cent during the October crisis, but for all the drama still managed to end the year slightly higher than it had begun it. As the charts show, how you interpret the crash depends on the perspective from which you look at it. On a short-term view, it was a dramatic collapse. What made it so frightening was that shares seemed for a while to have gone into virtual freefall.

The Dow Jones index in New York lost 508 points, or some 20 per cent, in a single day. Nobody has ever seen anything quite like it, before or since. But from a longer-term perspective, in the context of a 15-year bull market in equities, it merely looks like a blip in an otherwise relatively smooth upward path. (Anyone buying unit or investment trusts should look out for sudden improvements in their performance records, thanks to the management companies now being able to rebase the start of their 10-year record to the days after the crash.) Most shares were back to their pre-crash levels within a couple of years.

Why was it so dramatic, a fall? Two key factors in the scale of the fall were the impact of portfolio insurance and the still imperfectly understood links between the stock markets and the rapidly growing futures markets. Portfolio insurance was a clever but untried invention: a theory-driven system for using

computers to re-engineer institutional portfolios. Its fatal flaw was that it generated a flood of automatic sell orders at just the wrong time: the more share prices fell, the more sell orders it produced, to therefore exaggerate the market's decline.

Could the 1987 crash have been foreseen? No, in the sense that the scale of the fall was way beyond previous experience. But yes in the broader sense that the stock market had become overvalued and was bound to have to correct before too long. There was no shortage of signs that the market was becoming dangerously overheated in the early part of 1987. All the traditional valuation indicators that investors rely on – dividend yields, price/earnings ratios, asset value multiples – were flashing a warning as the market went into its giddy rise in the first half of the year.

The indicator that gave the most telling signal was the yield ratio, which measures the relationship between bond yields and the yield on the stock market. The ratio is a fundamental determinant of share values. In the UK, the yield on bonds at its peak in 1987 was 3.3 times the yield on the stock market, a higher multiple than it had been at any previous stock market peak. Medium and long-term interest rates started to rise some months before the market crashed.

That is one reason why it is possible to say that the market today is overvalued without having to say that it has to end in another crash like that of 1987. Although conventional valuation indicators suggest the market is again becoming overvalued, the yield ratio is still within its historical trading range. Long-term interest rates have not yet made any significant upwards move. When they do, it may be time to start worrying about violent market corrections, but that time is not yet here.

By happy coincidence, this writer was a guest of Mr Wood at a dinner hosted by the Association of British Insurers.

Mr Wood cuts a very imposing figure – as imposing, in fact, as the black man whose face no longer appears on Axa's brochures.

But the question that needs to be asked is: after Axa's purging of ethnic minority faces from its publicity, would you buy a pension from this man?

— Nic Gaurti



Imposing: Mark Wood

VIRGIN'S CHALLENGE

One to upset the high street banks

Virgin Direct, the financial services arm of Richard Branson's cola to airlines empire, is mounting its biggest challenge to high street banks by unveiling a mortgage-cum-bank account called One.

The company claims its one-stop account, which includes 24-hour telephone banking, a debit card and a maximum interest rate on all debts of 8.9 per cent APR, is a unique concept that will revolutionise the sector.

Mr Branson says: "Banking is inherently a very straightforward business. It astonishes me that it has been allowed to become so complicated."

The One account involves

prospective mortgage borrowers arranging a loan through Virgin, subject to a minimum of £50,000. On top of the loan, which can be up to 95 per cent of the property's value, Virgin agrees an additional loan facility of, say, £5,000. Interest on this additional amount is only levied when the facility is used.

Each month, account holders pay their income into the account. This reduces the overall amount owed.

Any additional lump sums are immediately credited, reducing the outstanding monthly interest paid. Virgin expects its customers to have paid off the outstanding loan before they re-

tire. The loan is secured on the value of the house until it is.

The rate of interest payable on the outstanding debt is tiered, rising from 8.2 per cent for a loan worth 75 per cent of the property's value (LTV), to 8.9 per cent for a 95 per cent LTV. As it reduces, borrowers ask to be moved to a smaller LTV rate, reducing the interest they pay. Otherwise, Virgin continues to assume that the potential line of debt is up to that proportion of the home's value and charges a higher rate of interest.

The company says the aim of the account is to give its holders control over their money. In addition to full monthly state-

ments, account-holders will receive a more detailed statement once a year, setting out whether they are on target to repay their loan.

Should account-holders move into credit, they will receive 5 per cent gross on any sums they save in One. The company admits this rate is not high, but claims that by the time borrowers are in the position of being in the black (its minimum borrowing timetable is five years) more competitive rates may be available.

Initially One will be restricted to Virgin's 200,000 PEP and pensions investors.

— Nic Gaurti

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TERMS & CONDITIONS

STARTING

Would you buy a pension from him?

You can use anyone's face to promote your personal pensions – as long as it is not black. This, it would appear, is the view of Axa Equity & Law, a life insurer.

The company had prepared brochures for its Multipension which carried a picture of a black person wearing a shirt and tie. He was dropped and an image of a woman wearing a jacket used instead.

The company claims its decision was not prompted by any

racial bias. The first picture was axed because the man did not look sober-suited enough.

Strange, then, that The Independent's personal finance section received a rash of calls from Axa staff suggesting the company caved in to suggestions from brokers that they would be unable to sell its pensions.

Apparently the decision was sanctioned by Mark Wood, chief executive at Sun Life and Provincial, the company merging with Axa Equity & Law.

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— Nic Gaurti



Imposing: Mark Wood

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Broaden your horizons and your portfolio

Investing in international markets can make good financial sense, providing you have your UK investments in place. The main advantage is diversification, as investing overseas spreads your risks, writes Abigail Montrose.

Only some 9 per cent of companies in the world, by market value, are quoted on the London Stock Exchange. If you want to invest in companies such as Coca-Cola and Microsoft, which are quoted in the US, you will have to buy units in a fund investing in Wall Street.

Similarly, investors may find if they want to invest in a particular industry sector, they will have to invest overseas, says Ken Nicholson, marketing manager Europe at Templeton Investment Manage-

ment: "If you want to invest in technology, forest products, pharmaceuticals or car manufacturing, you will need to invest overseas to get proper exposure to these sectors."

Investing in overseas stocks is best done through an investment fund. It is a lot cheaper than buying shares in foreign markets and less risky. There is no problem in speaking to a fund manager, who will watch all the factors that affect markets, such as currency and interest rate movements, something very difficult for a direct investor to do.

International investment also offers the chance to invest in economies growing faster than the UK. As well as the developed stock markets of the US and Europe, there is the chance to invest in developing countries in Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe.

The easiest and cheapest way to invest in international markets is through a general international

fund which invests over a wide geographical area, so if one market falls, the effect on your investment will be limited.

While it may not do as well as the top-performing regional funds, neither is there any danger of your money being invested in a single market that suddenly drops, as has happened recently in some of the South-east Asian tiger economies.

Investing internationally is not always a guarantee of making money. Japanese markets fell 32 per cent in the three years in October. But over the same period, the average North American specialist fund has grown 79 per cent, the UK equity growth sector is up 61 per cent and general European funds have risen 64 per cent.

When choosing a fund, Lee Gardhouse, investment manager at Hargreaves Lansdown, recommends using a large fund management house with good resources: "Managers with expertise in many

geographical regions include Foreign & Colonial, Martin Currie and Mercury Asset Management."

Martha Catterall, senior planner at City Independent Financial Planning, agrees. She favours Perpetual International Growth, Perpetual Worldwide Recovery, Britannia International Special Situations, Prolific Technology and Fidelity Managed.

Investors looking for potentially higher rewards may want to look at regional specialists. If you pick the right region, you could do better than investing in a general international fund. But as Ms Catterall points out: "Diversify helps to avoid the impact of a particular region suffering either a short-term or long-term downturn."

Even more specialist still are emerging market and single-country funds. These are at the top end of the risk spectrum and investors can just as easily see their investment halved overnight as doubled.

Beware of taking too much

Income funds remain popular but they are vulnerable to excessive demands, says Simon Read.

Expecting to make regular withdrawals from a fund in provide the income you require can make huge demands on your investment, especially in the early months.

Many investors have come a cropper when anticipated growth in a fund has not met expectations, while income has continued to be drawn. The result is that the income payments eat into the investment to such a degree that capital shrinks as the fund struggles to maintain regular payouts.

Indeed, many experts point out that the best performance is seldom found in an income fund. "Recently, UK growth funds have generally outpaced UK income funds on the basis of overall return," says Geoff Rollin, director at Devonshire Wilson Financial Services, a member of the Financial Options Group.

"Income funds have a specific risk in that the fund deducts its annual charges from capital. This means the income is higher than would have otherwise been the case, but growth in capital is constrained."

Despite the drawbacks, income funds remain popular. But investors face dilemmas, says Graham Bates, an independent financial adviser with Leeds-based Bates and Partners. "The age of the investor is important," says Mr Bates. "Someone looking to generate an investment income in early retirement, say mid-50s, will need to ensure that growth potential also exists. But the priority for older investors may be getting the maximum immediate income, with growth being a secondary consideration."

In order to achieve income growth, investors will need to have some capital appreciation in their fund. Mr Bates says: "The key is to look at the sector most likely to meet your investment objectives. Funds in the UK Equity Income sector will give you a low starting yield but the best prospect of long-term capital growth. Funds in the UK Equity and Bond sector offer a slightly lower risk and a higher initial yield, but less potential for growth. Those needing the highest level of income should look at the UK Fixed Interest sector."

It is also important to bear in mind the level of charges on all funds as they will further reduce the potential for capital growth.

Savings accounts that last from cradle to the grave

Changes are afoot in the investment world. The Government plans to introduce Individual Savings Accounts (ISAs) in 1999. Notice of this was given by Gordon Brown, Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his Budget in July. Nothing is known about the likely shape of ISAs, apart from the fact that ministers are in record as saying they will include the best features of PEPs and TESSAs.

The Inland Revenue is drawing up proposals on what to include in the new savings scheme. These are expected to be announced before the end of the year.

Ann McMeekhan of the Association of Unit Trust and Investment Fund Companies (Auitf), the industry trade body, says: "The ideal package will be a flexible vehicle for medium and long-term savings with low charges. It should provide for investment, including equities, and should be a part of sensible pension provision."

The investment industry would like PEPs and TESSAs to be transferred into the new ISAs. "We are waiting with bated breath for the details," says Michael Ashbridge, investment director of Save & Prosper. Tony Wood of Virgin Direct adds: "From savings to PEPs and pensions to ISAs should be a smooth transition."

Then there are Oeics, or Open Ended Investment Companies. These were introduced just before the general election to bring the fund investment industry into line with the rest of Europe.

So far just a handful have been launched, the latest being the New Europe Fund from Save & Prosper. This will invest in the new markets in Eastern Europe.

Oeics offer a simplified means of investing in a portfolio of shares, taking some of the best features of unit and investment trusts. The big difference is that they have just one price, which is the same whether buying or selling. The Oeic will be run as a company with a board of directors and can be quoted on the Stock Exchange.

Having invested in the Oeic, there will be a number of sub-funds on offer. These can range from tracker funds to cash funds, from growth or income funds to the more specialist sectors including emerging markets. "The umbrella fund will be able to offer cradle to the grave type funds," says Ms McMeekhan. "They will be all-embracing from the lowest to the highest risks. The investor can choose his or her own portfolio of sub-funds which can be rearranged to meet their lifestyle requirements."

— Tony Lyons

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Hold on, these could be famous

We decorate here, we decorate there. Yet there is one spot in our homes that frequently escapes our attention. Rosalind Russell grasps the issue - the doorknob.

When fashion designers hit on the idea of selling brand-name perfume to people who couldn't afford one of their frocks, they struck gold. For every sale of an £800 jacket, there are thousands more of a £25 bottle of scent carrying the same label. It has taken other designers a surprisingly long time, but they are catching up. Now, if you cannot afford to employ Norman Foster (designer of The Armadillo in Glasgow and the Hong Kong Shanghai Bank) as your architect, at least you can name-drop by buying a set of his door handles.

They have become one of the most popular lines sold by Franchi International, better known as a locksmiths and now recently expanded into the designer door-furniture market. Marco Franchi, son of the owner, took a showroom in Chelsea Harbour's prestigious Design Centre 12 months ago. Among the cognoscenti, a pair of Norman Foster's could be as familiar as a pair of Doc Martens. They are a must-buy among interior designers and magazine style editors, who come down to coo over the latest in home decor. The range includes leather and rubber handles and - at around £140 a pair - is not the kind of fixture you will want to leave behind when you move house.

There are cheaper ways to stamp your own personality on a property that comes with standard brass or nickel door fittings. Franchi sells knobs covered in hand-painted blue Italian glass at £8.46, ideal for giving a quick facelift to a boring run of kitchen cupboards. Crofts and Assinder in Birmingham has just launched a Tuscan range of kitchen cupboard drop cast-iron style handles, but its most popular style recently is the chrome-plated spring handle (£5.37), similar to the ones fitted to Aga cookers. That way you can assume the Joanna Trollope style without having to find £3000-plus for the cooker.

Haute Deco's French-designed resin handles and knobs come in almost any colour you can think of. They are shaped like crocodiles, ladybirds, fish, ducks and bears - from £13, all good for children's rooms - and more sophisticated pebbles, escargots, roses, stars and a striking frosted flame at £49. The new collection, available by mail order, or from the King's Road showroom, is geometric and minimalist.

Designing door handles was not the career path Steve Roberts had in mind when he started out as a sculptor.

"I was having a house in London gutted and re-



First open your wallet: These knobs by Norman Foster cost £103 plus vat

designed," he says. "It had horrible old Bakelite door handles but there was nothing interesting on the market to replace them with. I sculpted some and had them cast and then some friends commissioned me to make more."

A move from Shepherd's Bush to Devon nudged forward the idea which eventually became Turnstyle Designs, based near Barnstaple. First working out of a converted barn beside his farmhouse, he has now moved the business into what was a village shop. Inspiration for the designs have come largely from his natural surroundings

on the north Devon coast.

"Spending every weekend on the beach makes you realise that everything that comes out of the ocean has to be streamlined. And primarily, a door handle has to be comfortable to hold."

That has resulted in handles, hooks, cord pulls and shelving brackets shaped into fish, pelicans, ammonites, spiral shells and frogs. Composite marble, pewter, maple wood and bronze are among materials used. Handles start at about £40 a pair, knobs £6 and a cord pull £8.

"Most of the my designs are drawn on the back of an envelope while sitting on a train

up to Paddington," Roberts says.

Among his favourites are one which looks like a hand imprint in the sand (his young son's impression) and - the only non original design - a hand clutching a bar, a version of a Victorian safe handle. Attention to detail, like the tiny shell-shaped escutcheon dangling beneath a fish, or a feather beneath a pelican, makes them stand out from the crowd.

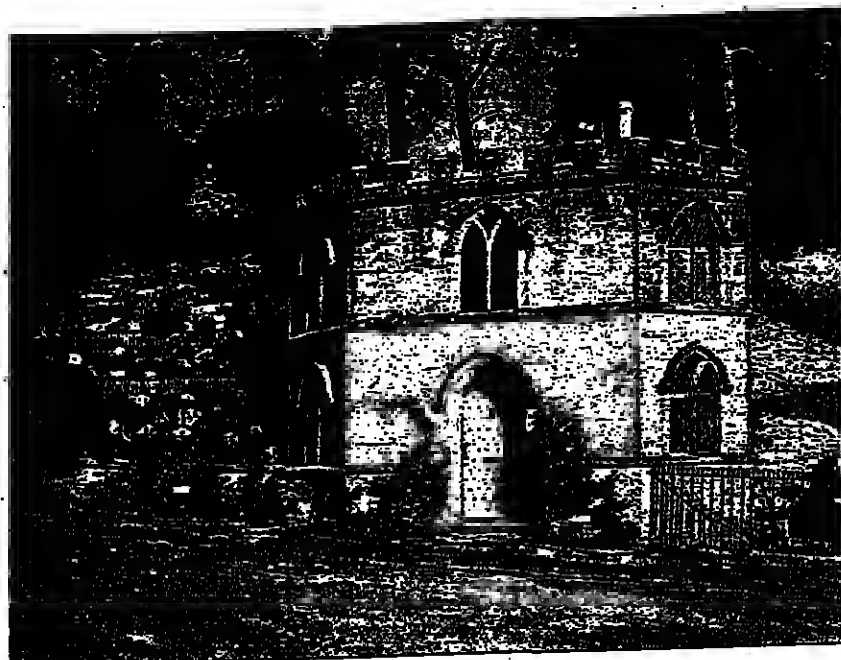
The problem with quirky, hand cast and original designs is that they tend to get copied by industry big boys who can turn out machine-made ones

cheaper. "There are about six of my designs currently making a lot of money for someone else," says Roberts, a member of Anti Copying in Design. "The trouble is it's difficult to copyright a design like a dolphin, or an ammonite."

One of his latest ideas should add fizz to the esoteric world of designer door handles: it is shaped like a champagne cork.

Franchi International 0171 351 4554; Crofts & Assinder 0121 622 1074; Haute Deco 0171 736 7171; Turnstyle Designs 01271 325325.

THREE TO VIEW: UNDER £75,000



The former gate-house to Dillington House in Ilminster, Somerset, is Grade II* listed and looks like a miniature castle, built of hamstone, with arched stone mullion windows and turreted roof. With two bedrooms (one just 9ft by 6ft7ins), open fireplace in the sitting room and outside, landscaped gardens, fish pond and parking space. Price £53,500. (Greenslade Taylor Hunt, 01460 57222.)



Medley Cottage in Rayne, near Braintree, Essex, is a Grade II-listed cottage with timber frame and pitched roof. The two bedroom property has exposed beams, open fireplace in the sitting room and gardens. It has been dated as 17th century, but local experts think it may be older. Offers invited around £75,000. (Trembach Welch, 01371 872117.)



An 18th century cottage 45 minutes from the beach in Brittany comes with two period barns and more than three acres. The four-bedroom, two-bathroom house is about an hour and a half from the ferry at St Malo. The owners, from Sussex, chose their holiday home to give their children the chance to enjoy wildlife, sailing, swimming and water-skiing. Around £47,000. (Domus Abroad, 0171 431 4692.)

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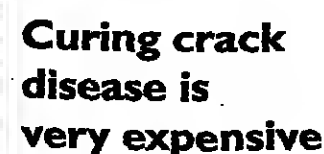
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Better ways home if you have no boss

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In its third quarterly review for 1997, Hamptons International reports that it has seen a marked slow-down of price increases in London

with a number of price reductions in some of the more expensive areas. Those who sold up in the frenetic early summer and moved out of town can feel pleased with themselves. Before sellers swing from euphoria to deep gloom, the review notes a levelling off, but definitely not a downturn. Good news for those outside the South-east is that the ripple effect is finally being felt. The West Country has seen the high-

'It looks as though it was made entirely of whatever materials were at hand'

est increases recently, with Gloucestershire and Wiltshire in particular achieving up 5 per cent increases in the middle to upper section of the market.

The same agents have an extraordinary cottage for sale made entirely from boulders. The single-storey building in Alton, Hampshire, looks rather like the kind of place made overnight as a matter of survival from whatever materials are available. In fact the stones are believed to have been salvaged from a demolished priory in Selborne, and the cottage is Grade II listed. It was built in the late 19th century close to the old Watercress steam railway. The asking price is £120,000.

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